

# BORDER SECURITY REPORT

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THE JOURNAL OF BORDER SECURITY AND TRANSNATIONAL CRIME FOR THE WORLD'S BORDER  
PROTECTION, MANAGEMENT AND SECURITY INDUSTRY POLICY-MAKERS AND PRACTITIONERS

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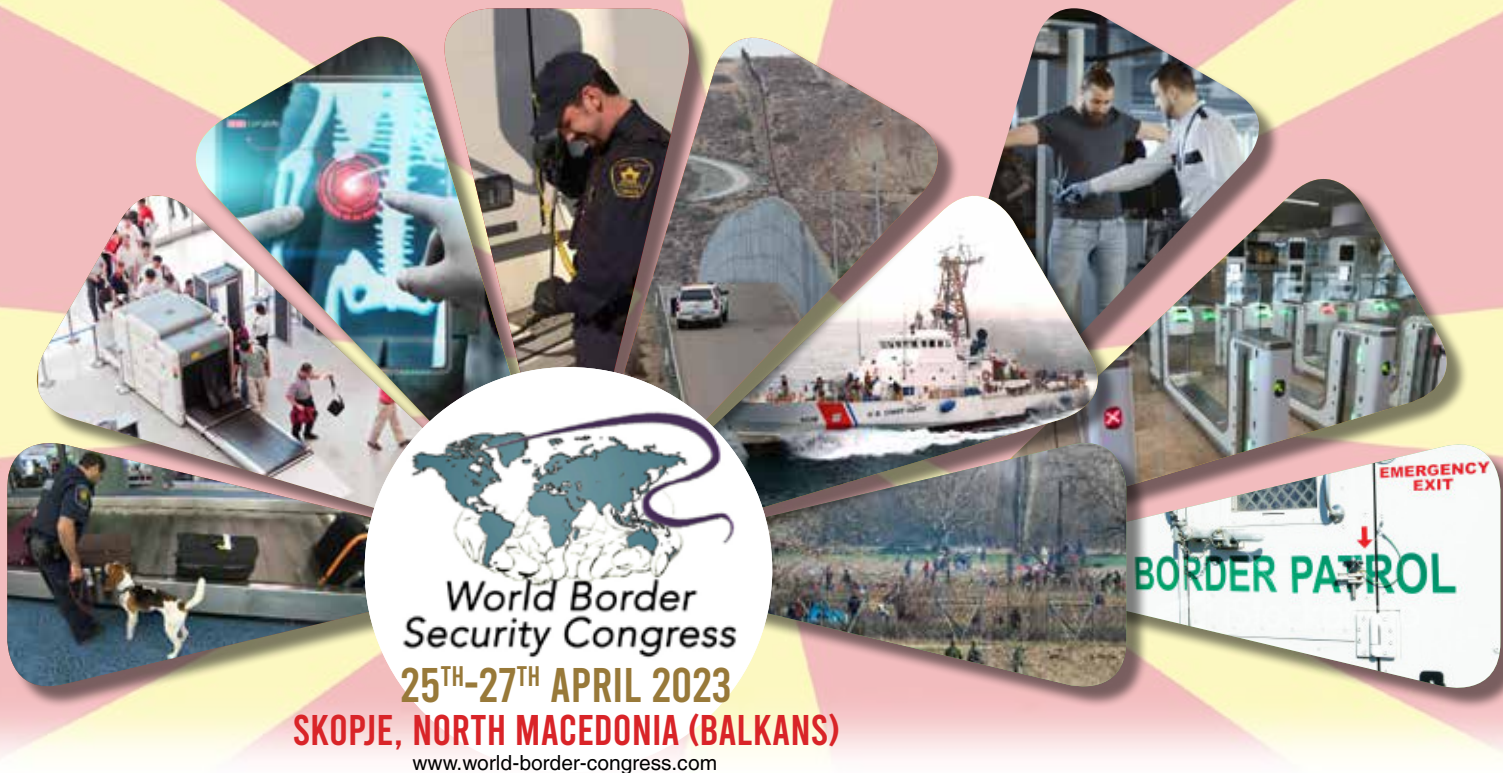
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## What does this year's flu season have in store?



Despite the fact that the Omicron variant is less deadly, we are early in the season and who knows (they do not) whether a new and more deadly variant could be just around the corner.

So, the border community could once again find itself in the front line of another pandemic wave.

We have been here before, so we are and should be armed and ready to roll out the protocols, procedures, and technologies to slow the spread of viruses across borders.

Of course, one of the things we learnt from previous pandemic waves is that in a globalised world, no measures will stop viruses spreading across borders. But the rate of infections within countries with low infection rates for any new variant, can be delayed by a significant margin, by taking the right measures early at the border, as Taiwan proved in previous outbreaks.

A single infected person can infect hundreds of people. So, any delays can save lives!

Tony Kingham  
Editor

SARS-CoV-2 Omicron is rapidly replacing SARS-CoV-2 Delta as the most worrying development in the COVID virus.

So, the big question, as we fast approach the flu season in the Northern hemisphere, is, are we heading for another wave of the pandemic? And if so, what can be done about it?

Well, it seems that despite the fact that the Omicron variant is significantly more transmissible than Delta, it is less likely to lead to severe clinical outcomes that require hospitalisation or ICU treatment.

But it should be emphasised that World Health Organisation (WHO) say that, as the Omicron wave travelled around the world, it replaced Delta as the dominant variant within 4 weeks.

## CBP, Princess Cruise Line Introduce Facial Biometrics at Port of San Diego



U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), in partnership with Princess Cruises, expanded the use of facial biometrics into the debarkation process at the Port of San Diego, becoming the latest seaport to modernize efforts to revolutionize cruise travel.

“As cruise travel resumes around our nation’s ports, it is increasingly important to implement this technology and safely restart cruising, a vital sector of the US travel economy,” said Jennifer De La O, CBP Director of Field Operations in San Diego. “With the biometric facial comparison process, travelers have the benefit of secure, touchless and streamlined entry procedures into the United States while CBP protects the privacy of all travelers.”

When debarking the cruise vessel at a U.S. seaport, passengers will pause for a photo that will be compared to the traveler’s existing passport or visa photo in secure DHS systems to biometrically verify his/her identity. Once verified, passengers are allowed to proceed through inspections and exit the terminal. This innovative entry process further secures and enhances the customer experience while protecting the privacy of all travelers. The improved arrival process using facial biometrics verifies the traveler’s identity within two seconds and is more than 98% accurate.

U.S. travelers and select foreign nationals who are not required to provide biometrics and wish to opt out

of the new biometric process can simply request a manual document check from a CBP officer consistent with existing requirements for admission into the United States.

To date, facial biometric comparison technology is available at 16 seaports across the United States and has been successfully used to process arriving passengers on cruise vessels in Florida, New Jersey, New York, Texas, California, Washington, Louisiana, Alabama, Puerto Rico, and Maryland.

Currently, more than 240 million travelers have participated in the biometric facial comparison process at air, land, and seaports of entry. As of November 2022, CBP has leveraged facial biometrics to prevent more than 1,600 impostors using genuine travel documents from illegally entering the United States at air and land Ports of Entry. More information on CBP’s use of biometric facial comparison technology to secure and streamline the arrival and departure process can be found at [www.biometrics.cbp.gov](http://www.biometrics.cbp.gov).

The San Diego Office of Field Operations covers ports of entry throughout Southern California, including San Ysidro, Tecate, Otay Mesa, Andrade, and Calexico.



# HIGH-LEVEL ARCHITECTURES OF MULTILATERAL INFORMATION-SHARING WITHIN THE MARITIME DOMAIN IN EUROPE

*by Laura Salmela, Adil Umer and Sirra Toivonen of VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland Ltd*

The complexity of security risks and threats in the maritime domain increases day by day. Irregular migration, human trafficking, drug smuggling, arms trafficking and illegal fishing challenge European sea borders to an ever-growing degree. Maritime routes constitute the most important intercontinental transportation channel, thus making them susceptible for a multitude of

misconduct by organised criminal groups operating in drugs, weapons and counterfeit goods smuggling. The importance of maritime security to EU's strategic interests is indisputable, as almost all external and a significant proportion of internal trade transit via sea routes.

Main vulnerabilities in seaborne trade supply lie in container

SafeSeaNet	THETIS	GoFRep	Baltic Sea Ice Management		LRIT EU DC		Maritime Safety and Security
FIDES	VMS	NEAFC	NAFO	IFMP	ICCAT		Fishery Control
CleanSeaNet	CECIS	GMES	EMODNet		SEIS		Maritime Environment
eCustoms							Customs
SeaHorse	EUROSUR	I2C	Perseus		SeaBILLA		Border Control
SIS	CoastNet		VIS		SIENA		Law Enforcement
Nato MCCIS	EUSC	V-RMTC	Nato MSSIS	MARSUR	SUCBAS	Mercury	Defence

Figure 1. A selection of sectoral information sharing systems in the maritime domain.

shipments, and the overall scope of containerised transportation (500 million containers annually) makes the detection of suspicious or security-critical loads a highly challenging task for relevant national authorities. The vulnerability and resilience of global subsea data cable networks and energy infrastructure to external attacks also raise significant concern, as the North Stream pipeline explosions vividly exemplify. Besides security risks, the introduction of new transportation routes, novel detection technologies and intelligent information exchange platforms impact the Member States' abilities in maintaining an adequate level of Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) or Maritime Situational Awareness (MSA).

To manage the multifaceted risk and threat landscape of territorial waters and the high seas, efficient multilateral cooperation and coordination are essential. They are also crucial prerequisites

for achieving required level of MDA/MSA, which refers to the effective understanding of anything associated with the maritime domain that could impact security, safety, the economy or the marine environment as defined for example by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO).

Traditionally, data collection for situational awareness has been a predominantly siloed activity of European and national authorities responsible for different aspects of maritime surveillance, and information exchange between various stakeholders has been technically, procedurally and geographically limited supporting mostly local, national, regional and sectoral approaches for data sharing. For example, the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI) has identified 33 different sectoral systems or system initiatives relating to the maritime domain (Figure 1). The sectors range from maritime safety

and security to border control and defence. Some of the listed items are already obsolete, such as FIDES, I2C, Perseus and SeaBILLA, which represent European projects completed in the 2010s.

The European Union Maritime Security Strategy (EUMSS) and its action plan highlight the significance of closer collaboration between authorities at national, regional and EU levels in enhancing maritime situational awareness. Above the EUMSS lies the EU's Strategic Compass, endorsed in 2021, underlining the importance of the maritime space for EU's strategic integrity and need to enhance EU's maritime security awareness mechanisms. To realise an effective, real-time and shared understanding of the maritime domain, several EU level initiatives have been undertaken and implemented as visible in the above listing. In the remaining, we address five systems in more detail.



On the civilian side, the Common Information Sharing Environment (CISE), initially launched in 2009, aims to ensure effective point-to-point information exchange between various maritime authorities. Over 300 EU and national authorities are engaged in CISE and benefit from the shared classified and unclassified information generated by existing surveillance systems and networks. Currently, CISE is transitioning into operational status with the process being led by the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA). Together with European-wide implementation, national implementations are also taking place at individual Member States with for example Finland and the Finnish Border Guard aiming to technically integrate and deploy CISE data services in autumn 2022. The project also studies cybersecure exchange of information.

The European Border Surveillance

System (EUROSUR) shares similar objectives of enhancing data sharing and cooperation between Member States with a distinctive border security focus on the particular type of information to be exchanged (e.g. data relating to irregular migration, cross-border crime and the protection and saving the lives of migrants). The 2013 established EUROSUR is operated by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) and is currently in the starting phases of a significant upgrade process. The revision work aims to cater for changes relating to the extended roles and responsibilities of Frontex and the Member States introduced by Regulation (EU) 2019/1898. At the background also lies a EUROSUR evaluation study, performed in 2018, which made several recommendations for improving the functioning of the system and enlarging its scope.

In the defence domain, the Maritime Surveillance project (MARSUR) is directed at creating an information exchange network that exploits existing naval and maritime information exchange systems. The lifecycle of MARSUR extends to September 2006, when it was launched by the European Defence Agency (EDA). The high-level objectives of MARSUR are uniform with CISE having a specific goal in improving the common Recognised Maritime Picture by facilitating exchange of operational maritime information and services such as ship positions, tracks, identification data, chat or images as specified by EDA. At the moment, MARSUR is undergoing its third development phase which aims to develop a next generation system also enhancing its interoperability with CISE and other maritime security regimes. Above all this is the intention to improve MARSUR's operational use

Information exchange environment/platform	CISE	EUROSUR	MARSUR	V-RMTC / T-RMN	IORIS
Year of establishment	2009	2013	2006	2006/2010	2018
Geographical coverage	EU MS / EEA	EU MS and 3rd countries to certain degree	EU participating MS, Norway, UK	Certain EU MS and 3rd countries	Countries in the Indo-Pacific
Domain	Civilian	Civilian	Military	Military	Civilian
Current reported status	Transition to operational status underway at EU level and in MS	Second generation roll-out underway	Third development phase underway	Operational, recent upgrade in 2018	Operational
Responsible national, EU or other entity	EMSA	FRONTEX	EDA	Italian Navy	EU CRIMARIO

Figure 2. Summary of an example set of MDA/MSA environments and platforms in Europe and beyond.



in missions and operations relating to EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).

Another example of European origin information exchange platform is the Virtual Regional Maritime Traffic Centre (V-RMTC) which aims at sharing selected unclassified information related to merchant shipping that exceeds 300 tons. The Italian Maritime Operation Centre of the Fleet Command Headquarter maintains the V-RMTC hub.

Since the launch of V-RMTC, its compatibility with external systems has been assessed, and in 2010, the V-RMTC was extended as a Trans-Regional Maritime Network (T-RMN). Currently, Navies from 24 countries participate the wider Mediterranean community, including both EU MS (e.g. Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Italy) and non-EU countries (e.g. Albania, Georgia, Senegal, U.K., the U.S). In addition to these, the T-RMN includes 11 Navies from Argentina, Brazil, Cameroon, Chile, Ecuador, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, Singapore, South Africa and Peru. During 2022, the T-RMN community is expected to expand by two new Navies from Africa (i.e. Ghana and Liberia). Ivory Coast, Qatar, Australia, and Japan have also expressed an interest in participating the network.

IORIS (Indo-Pacific Regional Information Sharing) provides one reference point to information exchange platforms outside the European Union. IORIS serves as a planning and coordination tool for maritime operations providing also C2 functions for crisis and incident

management. Close to 20 national and regional maritime agencies from 12 countries and organisations in the Indo-Pacific region were using the IORIS platform in 2021. These include Comoros, Djibouti, Jordan, Kenya, Madagascar, Maldives, Mauritius, Philippines, Réunion, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre (RMIFC, Madagascar), Regional Centre for Operational Coordination (RCOC, Seychelles), EUNAVFOR Atalanta JOC and EUNAVFOR Atalanta FHQ. IORIS is managed by the European project EU CRIMARIO.

Developing shared international MSA/MDA platforms across a multitude of actors is a complex and long-standing process taking several years to reach full or even limited operational status. Implementing such platforms requires careful orchestration of different external applications, legacy system and databases from various public authorities and other entities, not forgetting the political will, negotiations, agreements and consolidated legal basis needed for their implementation in different operational contexts. Information exchange and data models have to be harmonised, and the roles and responsibilities of participants clearly defined. Practical results have only started to realise towards the late 2010s – for example, MARSUR was utilised to support the EUNAVFOR MED Sophia operation in 2017. Most recently, MARSUR has been used in operations in the Gulf of Guinea relating to the concept of Coordinated Maritime Presence

(CMP) of the European Union External Action.

The comparison of the high-level architectures of the selected platforms focuses on how their components are structured and their interrelationships are organised. As the platforms mainly aim at information exchange and MSA/MDA generation, they primarily have a coordinating function instead of providing centralised command which would direct the use of included assets. CISE represents the most comprehensive platform as it engages the largest composition of heterogenous stakeholders ranging from local maritime agencies to national Navies and European agencies. CISE, EUROSUR and MARSUR are managed and maintained by European agencies, while V-RMTC/T-RNM is hosted by a national military organisation. Information exchange happens mostly on a voluntary basis, except with regards to the EUROSUR framework, in which National Coordination Centres (NCCs) are required to distribute information that is necessary for the creation and maintenance of European Situational Picture and Common Pre-frontier Intelligence Picture. However, to date, this has not been comprehensively achieved.

All examined platforms implement a service-oriented approach for architecture design. For almost two decades, service orientation has been a customary architectural concept also within the security-critical domains, as it enables the integration of processes,

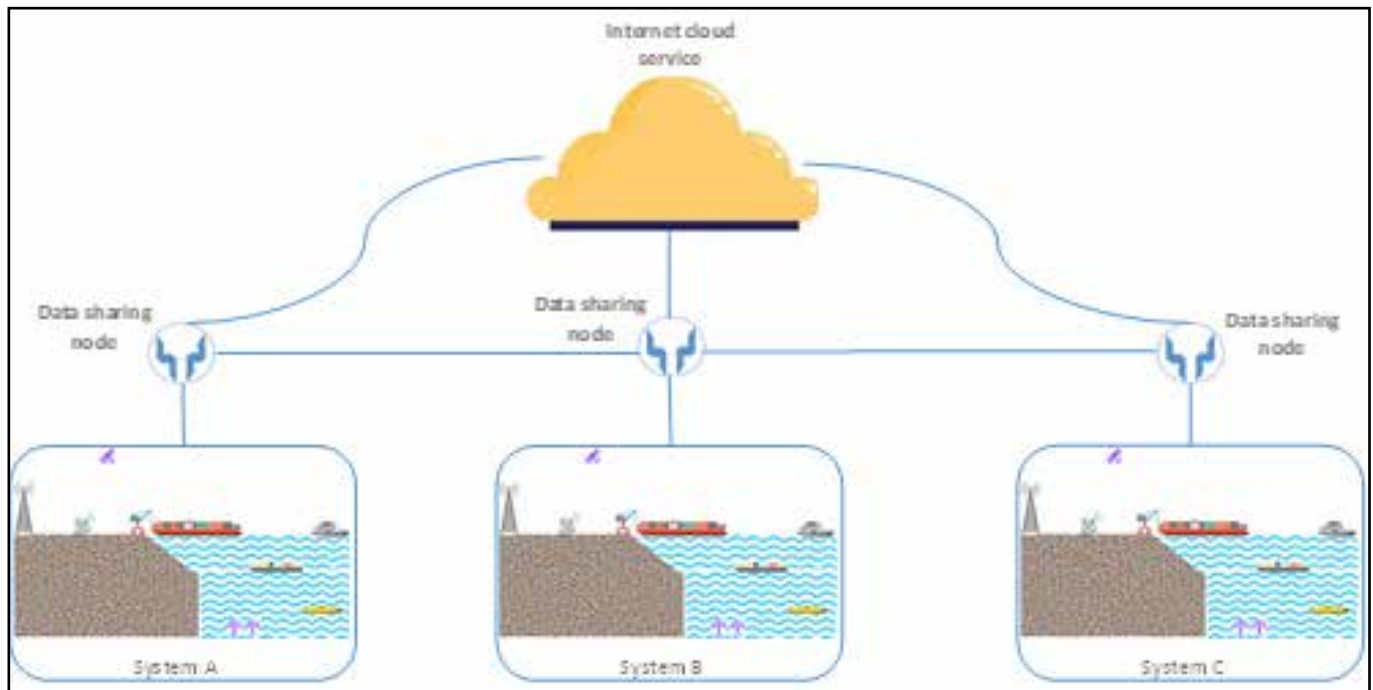


Figure 4. High-level architecture model for Maritime Domain Awareness platforms.

functionalities and data from heterogeneous systems into structured and interoperable services while safeguarding the integrity of legacy systems. At the core also lies the idea of reusability; information units collected within national surveillance systems or other systems relevant for situational awareness are made available to external stakeholders with coinciding information needs.

The key building blocks for information exchange are similar across the platforms including a central network and a set of nodes that serve as hubs and gateways for messaging and exchange. The legacy systems may be directly connected to the platforms through individual nodes or through shared nodes. However, some platforms still require manual information entries.

In addition, there may be a national node in place for redistributing data among legacy systems. All platforms aim at sharing both unclassified and classified data, however, practical implementation towards this direction is still ongoing. If non-EU stakeholders are engaged, particularly the sharing of classified information requires careful consideration and detailed clarification, as all data shared within a platform may become accessible for all participants.

Figure 4 provides a general schematic representation of MDA/MSA system architecture. The data-sharing node is an important interface that handles communication with other MDA/MSA systems that could lead to a development of a harmonized platform for sharing critical data

among various existing systems. The data-sharing node encapsulates underlying system complexity and provides standardized common application programming interfaces (APIs) for easy access to the data. It also holds the metadata, which represents data about data. The metadata defines different aspects of the data and summarizes what data is available for other systems to utilize. MDA systems include the interfaces to the national legacy systems and to the private or government data collection platforms. Additional value in the future is gained from the enhanced of multimodal combination with AI and data fusion strategies to detect criticalities and from the comprehensive dynamic visualisation of MDA with accurate up-to-date information.

Transnational data sharing within the domain of MDA/MSA involves a multitude of actors and platforms, which could leverage benefits of existing frameworks and standards to design and implement data-sharing nodes. The European Union has devoted significant resources and drafted policies to promote data sharing initiatives and platforms across its Member States. Two of the most recent, advance and complementary initiatives are International Data Spaces (IDS) and Gaia-X. The IDS is a European reference architecture for data sharing, and it provides standards and a reference architecture to establish a decentralized platform for

secure and trusted data sharing. The Gaia-X offers a software framework/ standard to connect existing cloud services and provide opportunities to create a federated digital infrastructure for Europe and ensure data sovereignty and interoperability. Adopting these novel approaches into next generation MDA/MSA platforms and validating their added value and fitness-for-purpose for the civilian or defence domains still requires extensive research.



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# THE ICAO DIGITAL TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION: STANDARDIZING THE ELECTRONIC VISA

*By Barry Kefauver and Christopher Hornek, Aviation Security & Facilitation, ICAO*

Over the last decade, a number of States began issuing online visas, often referred to as “eVisas”. This was carried out without the benefit of standardization, commonality, or definitions of what constitutes a travel authorization not physically issued in a passport booklet.

Without standardization, it is nearly impossible for anyone outside of an issuing authority to verify non-physical “eVisas”.

Despite this, online visa notifications are increasingly presented to aircraft operators as emails and/or printouts

that contain a myriad of datasets without security features that can be verified through an interoperable framework. In these situations, aircraft operators are unable to verify the “eVisa” as they carry out their document checks at the point of embarkation.

To address this, ICAO developed and defined a Digital Travel Authorization (DTA), which is intended to assist States and airlines in this situation. The DTA specification provides a step-by-step

framework for issuing an electronic notification containing a 2D barcode that can be easily read and verified, enabling both data capture and verification of integrity in one transaction. The DTA can be used in both digital and physical formats, meaning it can be presented on a smart device or on a printed piece of paper with the same security and results.

Additionally, ICAO's specification and guidance for the DTA encourages States to take advantage of automation for the steps associated with the travel authorization processes, including the continuum from application through airline verification to border inspection or acceptance.

Automating these steps, particularly the application and materials submissions, expedites the pre-vetting and eligibility decisions to allow an applicant to travel. This reduces the burden on both the issuing authority as well as the applicant, using an online approach for submissions; while providing an efficient method for applicants, governments, and airlines to verify the acceptance for travel. Importantly, the DTA standardizes the data set that is collected for each traveller, regardless of the issuing State. This provides a critical advantage to the aircraft operator since it can harmonize its method of verifying DTA barcodes.

## Background

Traditionally, the visa sticker has been glued in a passport as a foil-type travel document, to provide

a physical travel authorization. To support States and aircraft operators in checking visas, ICAO standardized the visa document in Part 7 of ICAO Doc 9303, Machine Readable Travel Documents (MRTDs) thereby creating

specifications for Machine Readable Visas (MRVs).

Not all States around the world have invested in visa management systems that can issue an MRV. In the same vein, ICAO Annex 9 – Facilitation to the Chicago

Digital Travel Authorization	Issued by UTO	Version 1	DTA Number: N154762B
<b>PERSONAL INFORMATION</b>			
Name of the Holder: <b>Anna Maria Eriksson</b>	Date of Birth: <b>1952-03-11</b>	Nationality: <b>USA</b>	Sex: <b>F</b>
Passport Number: <b>L8986901C</b>			
<b>DIGITAL TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION</b>			
Place of Issue: <b>Peacetown</b>	Valid From: <b>2021-06-06</b>	Valid Until: <b>2026-06-06</b>	
Duration of Stay: <b>5 years, 0 months, 0 days</b>	Number of Entries: <b>Multiple</b>	Type/Class/Category: <b>Tourist</b>	
Additional Information: <b>Employment Prohibited</b>			
			

## ICAO Doc 9303 Part 7 — Machine Readable Visas

Doc 9303, Part 7 defines the specifications for Machine Readable Visas (MRVs) which allow compatibility and global interchange using both visual (eye readable) and machine readable means. The specifications for visas can, where issued by a State and accepted by a receiving State, be used for travel purposes. The MRV shall, as a minimum, contain the data specified in a form that is legible both visually and by optical character recognition methods, as presented in Part 7 of Doc 9303. Additionally, Part 7 is now augmented with the DTA Technical Report which allows for the needed standardization of electronically issued travel authorizations.

Convention has not adopted an obligation on Contracting States to mandatorily issue one. Annex 9, however, does contain two Recommended Practices, which can encourage States to issue MRVs as such, and alternatively, urges States when they are not issuing a MRV, to at least conform to the visual zone of the visa format as set forth in Doc 9303, Part 7. The issuance of a standardized visa assists aircraft operators in taking necessary precautions during the document check prior to boarding.

Instead of investing in MRVs, however, a number of States have begun issuing “eVisas” without first agreeing on a method of standardization. The last decade has seen a proliferation of such visas. States implement such solutions to save costs and achieve efficiencies, since almost all involved processes are online and do not require a consular appearance by the traveller. The problem remains that these “eVisas” are not based on an interoperable framework, which creates a burden on the middleman – the aircraft operator – who is obliged to conduct pre-departure checks to determine if a passenger is in possession of the document prescribed by the States of transit and destination.

The DTA 2D barcode provides for easy readability by the verifier since it contains both the data set of the travel authorization and a digital signature which can be verified for data quality and integrity purposes. The barcode deployed by the DTA is called the Visible Digital Seal (VDS), which is an ICAO standardized

### DTA DATA CONTENT

- Name as defined in Doc 9303 and printed on the passport
- Date of birth
- Sex
- Nationality
- Passport number and 3 letter code of the Passport issuing state or organization.
- Passport date and place of issue
- Passport expiry date
- Contact details while traveling (telephone, email and address in State of destination)
- Residence address
- DTA type sought (e.g Business, Tourist etc.)
- Length of stay
- Primary destination/point of entry
- Purpose of the travel
- Previous application(s) and date(s)
- A declaration statement attesting to the truth and honesty of all information provided
- Any additional information as needed by the issuing authority.

#### **DTA Data Content**

- Name as defined in Doc 9303 and printed on the passport
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- Any additional information as needed by the issuing authority.



security feature already used for security documents. VDS technology provides a similar level of security to barcode-based documents as to chip-based documents, such as passports with an integrated circuit chip (the “ePassport”). VDS involves a simpler implementation of the same trust and verification model established for electronic MRTDs, extended to VDS-defined 2D barcodes. This technology has existed for some time and is contained in ICAO Doc 9303, Part 13.

The DTA deploys a specific type of VDS used for non-constrained environments or VDS-NC. Since the VDS-NC barcode can be larger, or non-constrained, there is room to store not only the dataset on the 2D barcode, but also the digital signature. This approach provides the following advantages:

- **Security:** Even though the cost of issuing a VDS-NC based document is very low, it is very difficult to fake or forge the DTA. Since the barcode signer is on the VDS-NC, only the root of the trust certificate is required to verify the DTA. Of particular importance, the DTA can be presented in both a physical form, as printed from the authorization document of the issuer as well as digital form on, for example, a smartphone.
- **Personalization:** Each digital seal verifies the information printed on the physical document, and is therefore tied to the document holder. There is no direct equivalent to a blank document, therefore no blanks can be lost or stolen.
- **Easy verification:** Even untrained



persons are able to verify a document protected with a digital seal by using low-cost equipment, such as a basic barcode reader or an application on a smartphone. Moreover, due to the binary nature of a digital signature, distinguishing between authentic and forged documents is straightforward.

#### **How does the DTA verification system work?**

The DTA process defined by ICAO Doc 9303 covers all of the steps included in a sound visa/travel authorization programme, including the ability to submit supporting materials online. Using specified formats, the issuing authority has available globally interoperable, standardized terminology and the ability to assess the eligibility of the applicant.

The VDS contains the barcode signer certificate, a certificate containing information identifying the entity that signed the VDS on a DTA, as well as the public key corresponding to the private key with which the signature was created.

The barcode certificate can be created with a distinct profile for the DTA, meaning the VDS on DTAs are issued in a way that allows verification by the Country Signing Certificate Authority (CSCA) certificates. This enables a State to re-deploy its Public/Private Key Infrastructure to not only accommodate eMRTD issuance, but also of DTAs.

**Public Key Distribution – the role of the ICAO Public Key Directory**

The ICAO Public Key Directory (PKD) is a central repository for exchanging the information required to authenticate eMRTDs such as ePassports, electronic ID cards and 2D barcodes in VDS format.

To verify a DTA, including a VDS formatted 2D barcode, any verifying entity will need to have access to the root of trust certificate, referred to as the CSCA certificate in ICAO terminology. For the DTA this is a fairly simple process for a State, since the State is both the issuing and verifying entity in one, meaning it is already in possession of its



CSCA. However, for an aircraft operator or a ground handling agent to conduct verification it will need to gain access to the issuing State's root of trust – the CSCA – to prepare the DTA check.

The ICAO PKD provides access to the trust certificates to all ICAO Member States free-of-charge. This

access has now been extended to private sector entities – such as aircraft operators – through a pilot project. Within this pilot project, authorized entities are permitted to use PKD data obtained from the public PKD data and Master List download website. Commercial use of the ICAO PKD will enable

widespread verification of the DTA in the aviation environment.

### Conclusion

The use of standardized DTAs will save aircraft operators human and financial resources currently being expended to validate non-standardized and non-harmonized “eVisas”. Implementation of the DTA will solve long-standing issues associated with online visa issuance. The DTA provides a globally interoperable model for issuing authorities to adopt and enables a framework for the aviation industry to verify electronically issued travel authorizations before departure.

*“This article was originally published on [UnitedAviation.com](https://www.unitedaviation.com), the blog of the International Civil Aviation Organization”*

## A new tool for identifying vessels involved in criminal activities developed by Transcrime, partner of the Promenade consortium

Approximately 12,000 vessels navigate European waters daily. A fraction of them is used for illicit trafficking of humans, drugs, and excise goods. Others are exploited to launder or conceal illicit profits from grand corruption and tax evasion. Others are controlled by sanctioned oligarchs and kleptocrats and should be frozen. Overall, public authorities struggle to keep the pace: Europol estimates that EU authorities annually confiscate only 1.1% of criminal profits in the EU.

However, in the last few years there has been a significant growth in both data and AI methodologies that can support practitioners' decision making and improve maritime surveillance effectiveness. In this domain, the researchers of Transcrime (research centre on transnational crime of Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore) have developed a specific expertise in data analytics for identifying anomalies in vessels'

ownership structure to spot those involved in criminal activities. They not only look at who controls a vessel, but also how control takes place: whether complex shareholding structures are used, high-risk jurisdictions are crossed, or opaque legal arrangements are employed to conceal the identity of the owner.

Within the EU-funded PROMENADE Project, Transcrime has developed Risk Investigator, an innovative tool to: (a) trace ownership structures and Beneficial Owners of vessels, even when deploying across borders; (b) identify adverse events (sanctions, enforcement, adverse media) linked to vessels, their owners and related entities; (c) detect risk factors and anomalies in vessels' ownership structure. In January 2023, the tool will be tested in operational trials with 3 EU Border Guards.

## UNODC and partners launch toolkit for tackling underreported crime of human trafficking for organ removal

All forms of human trafficking tend to be hidden, but human trafficking for organ removal is especially so. Driven largely by the global organ shortage for ethical transplants, it is estimated that only 10 per cent of global needs are covered. Criminal networks profit from the desperation of patients and coerce vulnerable people into selling organs.

Despite being listed as one of the forms of exploitation in the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, to date human trafficking for organ removal has received scant attention from anti-trafficking stakeholders and the international community.

On Tuesday, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) launched a new Toolkit on the Investigation and Prosecution of Trafficking in Persons for Organ Removal, designed to encourage the proactive investigation of possible cases or red flag indicators. The toolkit focuses on organized criminal networks and the illicit financial flows stemming from them.

“For too long, trafficking for the removal of body organs has remained in the dark. Very few investigations exist, and even fewer prosecutions take place. The new UNODC toolkit will help train criminal justice professionals to identify victims and bring traffickers to justice,” said Amina Mohammed, United Nations Deputy Secretary-General, at the launch via video message.

Addressing how the demand-supply issue plays into the hands of traffickers, Dr Tedros Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization, said, “The demand for transplants is outpacing supply. Weak donation and transplantation services in many countries have led to ‘transplant tourism’ and human trafficking for organ removal. The police and judicial agencies must work with health authorities to prevent and prosecute trafficking in persons for organ removal.”

The broad spectrum of actors involved in human

trafficking for organ removal, from surgeons and nurses to preparators who can match patients with compatible donors, makes it a complex crime. The lack of expertise in identifying and investigating this complex crime results in it being persistently underreported. The few reported cases confirm that this is a crime that spans the globe – all regions are affected in some way as source, transit or destination.

Noting that the new toolkit is the first of its kind, UNODC Executive Director Ghada Waly said, “It will give criminal investigators and prosecutors the power to understand the methodology for establishing a complex case of human trafficking for organ removal. Our ultimate aim is to identify potential victims before illicit transplants take place.”

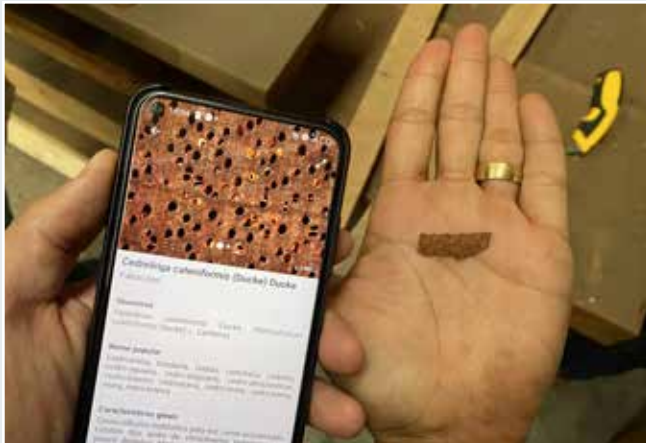
Case data confirms that criminal networks profit from the desperation of the unemployed, refugees, asylum seekers and migrants to pressure them into selling organs. Myths that this happens in back alleys and that victims are kidnapped still hinder the identification of victims. In actual fact, donor victims are recruited following a pattern similar to in other types of human trafficking. It can involve the promise of an exchange of small amounts of money, which some may never actually receive. Many victims suffer post-operative complications and health problems.

Greater attention must be paid to strengthening the regulatory framework around organ transplantation and the means by which so-called ‘buyers’ can engage in ‘transplant tourism’ to perform illicit transplants. By identifying which healthcare sectors may be at a higher risk of exploitation, we can better identify possible victims and prevent the crime.

Ambassador Silvio Gonzato, Deputy Head of the Delegation of the European Union (EU), stressed that the issue of trafficking in human beings for organ removal is also of grave concern to the EU, as reflected in the EU’s Strategy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings (2021-2025). He commended UNODC for the partnerships it built across all relevant stakeholders to deliver this toolkit.



## Illegal timber trade targeted in the EU and Brazil



Europol supported one of a kind international operation targeting illegal timber trade both in source and destination countries. The actions involved law enforcement authorities from Brazil, France, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal and Spain as well as the Latin American Project EL PAcCTO.

The actions targeted networks involved in environmental crime, illegal logging, smuggling, tax evasion, money laundering and document fraud.

More than 350 inspections took place in the joint action days in September. Investigators detected irregularities in connection to 17 companies (one in Italy, one in the Netherlands, three in Spain and 12 in Portugal). The relevant authorities opened criminal proceedings against one of these companies. The national authorities conducted the checks mainly at Brazilian ports for the export and European ports searching for illegal imports. Criminal networks use document forgery dissimulate the origin of the timber or the actual species in the shipment to pass customs controls and reach the consumers. Corruption is also an enabler of this criminal activity.

## Food fraud: about 27 000 tonnes off the shelves

Operation OPSON XI targeting food fraud has led to an increased number of seizures of fake food and beverages across Europe. The operation, coordinated by Europol for EU-wide actions. Europol received reports from 26\* countries that almost 27 000 tonnes of fake food had been seized. The operational activities were supported by the European Anti-Fraud Office

(OLAF), the European Commission Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE), European Commission Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI) and the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO), as well as national food regulatory authorities and private-sector partners. INTERPOL coordinated the activities led outside the EU.

## Spanish authorities clamp down on lavish lifestyle of criminal group

Spanish authorities have arrested 10 persons suspected of being involved in drug trafficking and money laundering in the second phase of an operation supported by Europol. The Guardia Civil carried out house searches in a number of cities, which led to the disruption of a criminal network providing financial and technical support to other criminal groups in Europe. Europol, the United States Drug Enforcement Agency and several countries\* were involved in bringing down this organised crime group.

Following an analysis of devices and documentation seized on the first action day, investigators were able

to link 10 people with bringing 117 tons of hashish and over 3 tons of cocaine into Spain. During the second phase of the action, the Guardia Civil raided venues in Barcelona, Ceuta, Almería and Málaga, where the suspects of Spanish, German and Moroccan nationality were apprehended. Among them is the main suspect's lawyer, who specialises in cases related to drug trafficking.



## Ponzi scheme suspects wanted via INTERPOL arrested in Greece and Italy

Two suspects wanted in connection with an international Ponzi scheme which defrauded thousands of victims in the Republic of Korea have been arrested in Greece and Italy with INTERPOL support.

The Polish and German suspects were wanted internationally under INTERPOL Red Notices issued by Korean authorities for their alleged role in the scheme, which embezzled approximately EUR 28 million from some 2,000 Korean victims.

The arrests follow coordination between the INTERPOL National Central Bureaus (NCBs) in Greece, Italy, Poland and the Republic of Korea as well as the INTERPOL Financial Crime and Anti-Corruption Centre

(IFCACC), INTERPOL's Fugitive Investigative Support unit, and its Cybercrime directorate.

The Polish suspect was arrested at Imola race circuit following real time information exchange between the NCB in Rome, Italy's Guardia di Finanza Investigation unit and INTERPOL. Police at Athens International Airport arrested the German suspect as he attempted to travel to Dubai after an identity check detected his Red Notice status.

INTERPOL's global network is further supporting on-going police investigations in Poland where criminals tied to the Ponzi scheme have allegedly scammed thousands of victims.

## Australian support enhanced INTERPOL database to combat online child abuse



The Australian Federal Police (AFP) is contributing AUD 815,000 for a significant enhancement to INTERPOL's International Child Sexual Exploitation (ICSE) database.

The ICSE database is a ground-breaking tool to

advance child exploitation investigations through strengthened global information sharing.

The upgrade, known as ICSE Next Generation, is designed to speed up the process by which investigators identify victims in child exploitation material, through integration of the latest technologies for improved text, audio and video analysis, facial recognition, and artificial intelligence.

Launched 13 years ago, ICSE currently connects specialist investigators in 68 countries and has so far assisted in the identification of more than 31,000 victims, including 860 victims in Australia.

In addition, more than 14,000 offenders have been tracked and arrested by law enforcement, including 349 in Australia.

## INTERPOL-coordinated operation combats organized crime in Asia-Pacific

More than 60 fugitives wanted for crimes ranging from financial crime, online gambling and drug trafficking were arrested across Asia during an INTERPOL-coordinated operation.

INTERPOL launched Operation Tighten the Net between September and October in partnership with the Korean National Police Agency. Operation Tighten the Net 2022 involved 13 countries: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam along with China, Japan and Korea. Simultaneous action in the participating countries led to new criminal intelligence gathered to support ongoing investigation.

As a result of the operation and intelligence sharing, 80 Red Notices and 15 Blue Notices were issued.

INTERPOL's Blue Notices are used by member countries to collect additional information about an individual's identity, location or activities in relation to a crime.

INTERPOL NCB Coordination Desk (ASP) together with NCB Seoul organized a meeting in November to share outcomes of the operation and plan for future actions in the region. Other key partners included the Swedish Police Authority and U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation.



## OSCE supported seminar in Bishkek fosters international co-operation in countering financing of terrorism

The OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek organized the seminar in co-operation with the Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism (EAG), the Commonwealth of Independent States Anti-Terrorism Centre, and the International Training and Methodology Centre for Financial Monitoring.

The participants discussed modern methods of collecting and moving money and instruments for terrorist financing purposes. In addition, the experience of countries in identifying persons moving from areas of heightened terrorist activity involved in terrorist financing was presented, and the terrorist financing risks associated with the movement of refugees from Afghanistan was examined.

## Multi-agency teams from North Macedonia explore financial disruption options to counter terrorist financing

Twenty-seven officials, including twelve women, actively participated in the course. They represented eight national agencies involved in countering terrorist financing, including the Republic of North Macedonia's Ministries of Internal Affairs and Defense, the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office for Combating Organized Crime and Corruption, the Customs Administration, Financial Police, Intelligence Agency, Financial

Intelligence Office, and the Agency for National Security.

The participants learned to assess and disrupt terrorism by examining the "business model" of related groups. A team of local trainers presented techniques such as functional and vulnerabilities analysis, and auditing. By applying these on a localized scenario, inter-agency teams considered which financial disruption option would achieve maximum impact.

## OSCE and UNODC organize a workshop for Georgian experts on countering illicit use of virtual assets and cryptocurrencies



The Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA), in partnership with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) conducted a workshop on regulating virtual assets for more than 30 experts from relevant agencies in Tbilisi, Georgia. The experts discussed the current situation on the national virtual assets market,

the money laundering potential of cryptocurrencies, relevant regulations and legislation, and software tools for investigating illicit transactions conducted in cryptocurrencies. The participants also discussed measures to raise awareness on the money laundering risks of virtual assets and cryptocurrencies among the general public.

Recent developments in the area of virtual assets prove the relevance of the project and its activities, especially for the national authorities, lawmakers and other relevant agencies, in particular in Georgia.





## IOM Launches Project to Tackle Organized Crime on Lake Victoria



The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has launched a sub-regional project on detecting and deterring transnational organized crime (TOC) on Lake Victoria in Kenya, Uganda, and the United Republic of Tanzania.

The project is expected to improve the coordination between national border authorities in the three

countries to address TOC, enhance the management of Lake Victoria's ports, and increase capacity of frontline officials through specialized border security trainings. It will also improve engagement between border authorities and maritime border communities to tackle TOC and challenges related to facilitation of cross-border trade.

Lake Victoria, shared by the three countries is the world's second largest tropical freshwater lake. It supports the livelihoods of an estimated 40 million people in East Africa. Even so, it is faced with a myriad of challenges, including evolving cross-border threats and transnational criminal networks, combined with limited operational capacities and resources, and gaps in border security infrastructures. Hence this three-year initiative, which is funded by the United States of America Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs.

## IOM, NIS join forces to raise awareness on issue of Smuggling of Migrants and Trafficking in Persons across Nigeria

IOM in partnership with the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS) launched a nationwide sensitisation and enlightenment campaign on the issue of smuggling of migrants within and outside the borders of Nigeria.

Every year, many Nigerian migrants embark on treacherous journeys as they leave their country searching for a better future abroad. Migrants travelling via irregular routes face risks such as

trafficking in persons (TiP), extortion, physical abuse, torture, forced labour, rape and even death.

Between 2017 and 2020, more than 159,000 individuals from West and Central Africa arrived irregularly to Europe by sea and land. Nigeria as a country of origin, transit and destination, counts among the countries with the highest number of victims of TiP and smuggling in the region.

## IOM Decries 50,000 Documented Deaths During Migration Worldwide

More than 50,000 people worldwide have lost their lives during their migratory journeys since IOM's Missing Migrants Project began documenting deaths in 2014, according to a new IOM report published. Despite the increasing loss of life, little action has been taken by governments in countries of origin, transit, and destination to address the ongoing global crisis of missing migrants.

"While thousands of deaths have been documented across migration routes each year, very little has been done to address the consequences of these tragedies, let alone prevent them," says Julia Black, co-author of the report.

Over 30,000 people in the Missing Migrants Project records are of an unknown nationality, indicating that more than 60 per cent of those who die on migratory routes remain unidentified—leaving thousands of families searching for answers.



## Frontex and France run pilot project to ease travel across borders



Frontex is running a technology pilot project together with the Ministry of Interior of France as part of the agency's efforts to provide Member States with solutions to facilitate traveller movements across borders. The project invites volunteers to answer a

standard border control questionnaire before or while travelling by ferry to the Port of Saint-Malo in France.

The intended participants are non-European Union citizens coming to the EU for a short stay. The website is used to test the impact of self-registration on overall processing times and the potential of a self-served mobile application for further improvements in border control.

Member States are currently preparing for the implementation of the Entry Exit System which will introduce changes to the process at the border for many travellers. This new system will provide opportunities for greater use of automated or self-served tools, which could improve the travel experience and help expedite the crossing.

## Frontex and Moldovan authorities practice detecting firearms

Frontex held a firearms detection course in Ungheni, Moldova, together with the Moldovan Border Police and Member States' experts.

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 risk of smuggling of firearms and ammunition through the EU's external borders has recently increased as criminal networks try to

exploit the situation.

During the training, Moldovan border police and customs officers had the opportunity to refresh their knowledge of methods of illicit weapons trafficking, to upgrade their detection capabilities, to practice how to operate equipment, as well as to conduct a detailed assessment of risk indicators linked to potential traffickers and to recall the necessary steps following a detection.

## Getting ready for a revolution in travel

Frontex has more than doubled the size of the team that will help run the central unit of ETIAS, the European Travel Information and Authorisation System. When it launches in a year, Frontex staff will be working around the clock to make it easier for travellers from countries with no visa requirements to enter the EU, while keeping Europe safe.

With the introduction of the system, travellers from more than 60 visa-free countries will be required to apply for an ETIAS travel authorisation to enter 30 European countries. ETIAS will reduce control procedures on arrival, shortening the time needed to cross the EU's

external borders.

It will strengthen border management, reinforce the EU's visa liberalisation policy and help prevent illegal immigration, while also contributing to the fight against terrorism and organised crime. Similar entry authorisations for visa-free travellers have been introduced in the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.



## First Personnel Training Resource Centre Opens at the Lagos Command of the Nigeria Immigration Service

The IOM in collaboration with the Nigeria Immigration Service and the Government of Netherlands has launched a new Personnel Training Resource Centre at the Lagos Command of the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS).

IOM carried out an assessment of the NIS training system in 2014. One of the major gaps identified was an over-reliance on long courses offered at the Service's four training institutions, thus, resulting in many years (average of seven years) of wait before entering a course, and many more years (average of 20 years) of wait before being served with a subsequent course. Consequently, only a low percentage of NIS personnel benefit from crucial trainings.

Subsequently, a new NIS Training Strategy was developed and officially adopted by NIS in 2015. The strategy suggested the need to bring trainings close to

NIS through established training centres situated at NIS commands, which are equipped with training materials.

The NIS Training Strategy Implementation Programme -Phase 2 (TSI-2) Project led by IOM and funded by the Government of The Netherlands is a continuation of the pilot phase which is targeted to enhance the fundamental capacity of border officials in dealing with migration issues and to increase awareness on the need to continuously improve and monitor the quality of border security and management. To date, over 2600 NIS officers and 190 NAPTIP officers have been trained across the seven established PTRCs in the country located at NIS HQ, Abuja, Anambra, Edo, Cross River, Kano, Kebbi and Ogun State Commands.

## One Step Closer to Ending Human Trafficking in Honduras



Although it is found in every country and region of the world, trafficking in persons remains an often hidden crime. Traffickers take advantage of the vulnerability of socially marginalized groups to attract victims for different forms of exploitation.

In the Americas, Honduras is often one of the countries of origin of victims of trafficking for forced labour. According to the national authorities, in 2021, about 40 percent of all victims detected in the country were forced into some

form of human trafficking for forced labour, such as domestic service.

To strengthen the country's response to this crime, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) with the support of the Department of Public Security of the Organization of American States (OAS) last year launched MENTHOR, a specialized mentoring program for prosecutors, law enforcement agents and government officials involved in victim identification and assistance, to enhance their skills and abilities in investigating and prosecuting trafficking in persons.

The first module of the program was completed this month for a selected group of 126 criminal justice experts, being 79 women and 47 men, from different parts of the country.

Local judges, prosecutors, police officers and other professionals were trained on how to investigate and prosecute complex human trafficking cases, particularly for the purposes of forced labour and services involving domestic and agricultural workers.



# SHIPPING CONTAINERS - THAT MARVEL OF MODERN LOGISTICS, FOR GOOD AND FOR BAD!

*by Tony Kingham, Editor, Border Security Report*

In our last issue we looked at mobile port security systems. In this issue, we will take a look at another related subject, that of intermodal security. And what better exemplifier of a truly intermodal system than shipping container traffic?

Over ninety percent of the world's trade moves by sea, and, over seventy percent as containerized cargo.

That seventy percent arrives at a port by train or truck, is loaded onto a ship and carried on-board to its port of destination. It is then transferred to another train or truck and transported to a town near you. The system is a marvel of modern logistics and has transformed the way we live and do business. It underpins the 'just in time' industrial production system, the growing

dominance of online commerce and more generally globalisation itself.

So, containerisation is the very essence of intermodalism.

But with all good things come their own set of problems.

One of the advantages of a container is that it is sealed and lockable. One of the disadvantages of container is that it is sealed and lockable.

Generally, containers are bolted shut and fitted with high-security hardened steel padlocks, which are both cut and drill resistant. This means that they are exceedingly difficult to open and tamper with without proper authorisation.

Once loaded and locked the container will not be opened again until it arrives at its final intended destination, not unless customs officials along its route or at the final destination decide to open and inspect it.

This system has drastically curtailed (though not completely eliminated) portside pilfering by dockers, which has been endemic since man first transported goods by sea and has cost untold billions.

But the inherent security of containers and the incredible worldwide logistical system that they underpin, means that bad actors have inevitably seen this as an opportunity. Containers provide a secure fast and efficient way to get illicit goods from one place to another.



The vast majority of containers, are of course, carrying legal goods, but inevitably some are being used to smuggle drugs, weapons and even people. A situation that poses a very real and serious threat to the national security of the transit or destination countries.

Customs officials, armed with a careful evaluation of each container's documentation, may select specific containers for inspection, but physically inspecting containers is inevitably slow and expensive. And delays cost money and undermine the efficiency of the entire system.

According to the UNODC more than five hundred million containers move around the globe each year and less than two percent of these are inspected.

So, traffickers like good businesspeople anywhere will make allowances for loss or damage of goods in transit. And according to the US National Retail Federation, industry averages for loss or

damage run at between eight and ten percent of all purchases.

It is therefore a sound business decision for drugs and weapons traffickers to choose the intermodal system. With inspections running at only two percent, and the majority of those containers physically inspected not actually resulting in seizures, projected losses for drugs and weapons can be expected run at well below retail industry standards!

The UNODC Container Control Programme (CCP) was launched in 2003 and was developed jointly by UNODC and the World Customs Organization (WCO) to assist Governments to create sustainable enforcement structures in selected seaports in order to minimise the risk of shipping containers being exploited for illicit drug trafficking, transnational organized crime and other forms of black-market activity.

There are three key elements to the programme.

The creation of inter-agency

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container profiling units called **Joint Port Control Units (JPCUs)** at selected container terminals in seaports as well as dry ports. The units are located in a secure environment, preferably inside the ports, and staffed by front line personnel from different relevant law enforcement agencies. The officials are trained, through the use of risk analysis and other proactive techniques that allow them to systematically target cargo manifests and other relevant data to target high-risk containers in transit.

The **training** itinerary is broken down into various phases. The first phase consists of basic training which familiarizes trainees with the various international legal instruments and the principles concerning information sources, risk analysis and other profiling techniques, cargo inspection, information exchange mechanisms, port seizure investigations and trade facilitation. The use of the internet as an open information source is also addressed during training. Following this classroom training, trainees are then introduced to practical training in identifying and inspecting substantial risk containers all conducted under the supervision of experienced trainers.

This basic training is then used during the advanced training stage in which trainers conduct more specialized training, such as targeting of CBRNe material. The array of subjects targeted during



these training sessions, take into consideration the specific needs, and identified problems of the relevant countries. UNODC and WCO work closely with relevant agencies to deliver the necessary training.

The third training phase consists of a Study Visit to a benchmarking port which provides the trainees with the unique opportunity to gain experience first-hand from experienced law enforcement officials and discover different working techniques.

The fourth phase encompasses regular mentorship by trainers. This mentorship is organized to warrant the sustainability of the program and to ensure that officials who are new to the programme are being adequately trained and possess the same level of skills as their colleagues.

The inter-agency container

profiling units are equipped to exchange information with counterparts in other countries using a secure communication application developed by WCO called **ContainerComm**. This is an internet based and multifunctional communication tool which facilitates the encrypted exchange of sensitive information between authorized users in participating countries, including alert notices of the shipment of possible high-risk containers. It also allows users to verify container numbers. **ContainerComm** is cost effective and requires no special installation. It is continually being enhanced and is available in English, French, Russian and Spanish.

The inter-agency container profiling units are also given access to a search and tracking system for containers. This system allows the users to search and track containers with specific destinations and also



gives the user detailed information about the type of cargo, routing, freight payment methods and all information needed to profile and identify high-risk containers.

The CCP has produced significant results in seizures of illicit goods and merchandise since its inception. The Executive Director of UNODC, Mr. Yury Fedotov has stated that the CCP has had “spectacular results, intercepting maritime shipments of illicit drugs, endangered species, counterfeit goods and stolen cultural artefacts. The effects of this work speak for themselves and with the expansion of this programme into more and more countries it will help the authorities to further tackle criminal networks.”

Whilst finds based on good intelligence is the most effective way of countering the trafficking of drugs and weapons, technology plays an important part for most frontline

customs and border operations.

Non-intrusive large-scale high energy x-ray scanners have proved to be an incredibly valuable tool and the take up of this technology has been widespread, with upwards of 80% of trading ports using them.

They rely on x-ray technology to detect anomalies of shape within vehicles and containers, such as weapons.

There are plenty of these market from companies like American Science and Engineering (AS & E), Astrophysics Inc. , Leidos Security Detection & Automation, Inc., Nuctech Company Limited , Rapiscan Systems and Smiths Detection.

These systems have proved successful, but they have their limits. The first problem, as it is so often, is the human factor. The systems are only as good as the people who

use them. When operators spend long hours in front of a screen, looking for what is deliberately well hidden, in often complicated loads, will inevitably result in missed detections.

The answer to this problem has been the introduction of automated detection to these systems, utilising Artificial Intelligence (AI).

*“When it comes to automated scanning and in particular automatic detection using High Energy X-Ray systems, there are two things that are crucial to success, Quality and Quantity. That is the quality of the data provided around the image and the quantity of the images captured with associated metadata. The more, good quality images you take, the better the data references and the more you increase the probability of detecting anomalies. And the more images and data sampled alongside identified anomalies the algorithm detects the better it gets at detecting anomalies. That’s the beauty of AI.”*

Kevin Davies (Global Director – Ports & Borders) of Smiths Detection told BSR.

Whilst high energy x-ray scanners are good at looking for objects, (especially objects like weapons which are made up of distinct shapes that are difficult to disguise), organic materials like drugs and explosives pose a whole new set of problems.

High energy x-rays systems do not offer colour discrimination yet, so



organic materials like powders, resin or liquids cannot easily be identified. That being the case, the only option is to identify voids and spaces (structural anomalies) that should not be there, where illicit materials may be hidden.

There are technologies that will help identify these materials, but that's a subject for the next issue.

What this does prove is currently, there is no 'silver bullet' technology when it comes to the fight against cross border crime and a layered approach is still the way to go!



## Three arrests for migrant smuggling across the English Channel



An investigation by law enforcement and judicial authorities from Belgium, France and the UK, supported by Europol and Eurojust, led to the arrests of three individuals suspected of being involved in migrant smuggling using small boats across the English Channel.

A number of interceptions made in 2021 in Belgium uncovered the suspects' links to a migrant smuggling network which was transporting migrants in small boats from France to the UK across the English Channel. The investigation suggests that some of the members of the criminal network were operating from France, while others operated from the UK. The information exchange between involved national authorities through Europol and Eurojust channels led to the identification of a number of suspects.

Following this international cooperation at the judicial and law enforcement level, French and UK law enforcement authorities arrested two suspects (one Iraqi and one Kuwaiti national) by order of the investigating judge in Bruges. At the same time, French Border Police made one arrest (one Iraqi national) under a European Arrest Warrant issued by Belgium.



# THE MAGIC 8 BALL

*by Dr John Coyne, Head of Strategic Policing and Law, Australian Strategic Policy Institute*

In 1946, Albert Carter and Abe Brookman designed the 'Syco-Slate'. In 1950, the Syco State's functional components were used to create the 'Magic 8 Ball'. A novelty fortune-telling device, the Magic 8 Ball in time would become a pop culture staple.

The device's operation is simple. The user asks the device a 'yes' or 'no' question, then shakes it before looking at a small window where an answer appears (I won't ruin the mystery by revealing its inner workings).

Intelligence officers are frequently asked impossible binary 'yes' or 'no' questions about the future. So, by the mid-2010s, almost two decades into my intelligence career, I began gifting magic eight balls to my staff as a gag gift.

What does an oversized eight-ball have to do with Border Security? Lots.

Over the last several years, I have presented on a number of border agency leadership courses in Australia, the Pacific, Southeast Asia and Africa. After each presentation, ambitious and well-educated border officials ask me about the future of border security. I always preceded my answer with reference to the Magic 8 Ball, and how great it would be if we had a similar fortune telling device.

Between the late 1990s and until the arrival of Covid-19, it appeared that borders, writ large, were becoming less important. Many a futurist gripped tightly to an almost religious belief in the kind of future globalization where borders

and sovereignty were irrelevant. Unfortunately, increased irregular people movements, then Covid-19 and an increasingly uncertain geopolitical context have resulted in the opposite. Borders and sovereignty are back massively.

Predicting the future of border security is no easy task and arguably a somewhat arcane practice. I suggest that the better approach seeks to reduce surprise and uncertainty for border agency leadership. This approach is best made not by asking binary questions but by anticipating a range of potential futures.

To be future-ready, border agencies, and their workforces, will need to come to terms with this, but also a new paradigm. This new paradigm is one of continuous and concurrent challenges. For example

- the Australian Border Force (ABF) has, for more than two years, dealt with the challenges of Covid-19. Now the ABF, while maintaining its Covid efforts, is actively involved in responding to an animal health bio-threat: foot and mouth disease.
- Similarly, many European border agencies are dealing with Covid-19, irregular migration, and the impacts of the war in Ukraine.

Borders are essential to sovereignty and security and will likely remain so. Arguably, border agencies that hold onto their bureaucratic and hierarchical cultures too tightly will struggle to be ready for rolling and



concurrent challenges.

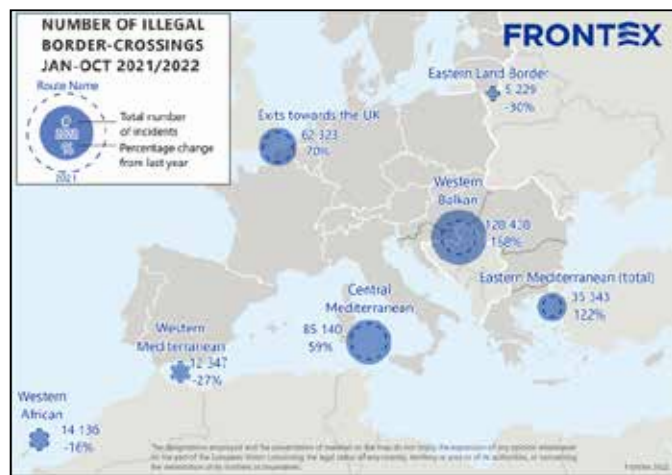
Border agencies to be future-ready in this new operating context must increasingly be capable of rapidly and dramatically adapting. Future-ready border agencies need to dramatically change from a process mindset to one focused on outcomes. Or in other words, doing the right things will become as important as doing something right. This mindset change will ensure they are ready for a range of potential futures.

This change will have some very significant implications for border agency workforces. There will remain a requirement for developing and retaining highly skilled specialist workers. There will also be an increasing requirement for a multi-skilled and agile workforce where officers can be rapidly surged to meet rapid organisational changes.

To develop this new workforce, border agencies must encourage and promote officers developing multiple skill sets. They must also encourage their workforces to take on new challenges. A mindset that encourages experimentation and innovation must also be developed, accepting that failure is a possibility that brings all new opportunities.

Reliance on the Magic 8 Ball futures thinking is a mistake. My consistent advice for all border officers is that they must read and read often. While and after reading, our officers must be willing to think about what they are reading and ask probing questions: 'So what?', 'What does this mean?' and 'What ought one to do?' to start. Officers must then be willing to share their thoughts and test their ideas with their colleagues before thinking about what they have heard and observed. And, of course, this is a continuous process.

## EU external borders in October: Number of irregular entries on the rise



In the first ten months of this year, 281 000 irregular entries were detected at the external borders of the European Union, according to preliminary calculations.\* This represents an increase of 77% compared with the same period of last year and is the highest since 2016. The Western Balkan route into the European Union remains the most active.

In October, EU Member States recorded about 42 000 irregular crossings, 71% more than in the same month in 2021.

In total, more than 2 300 standing corps officers and Frontex staff are taking part in various operational activities at the EU external border.

### Key developments:

- 281 00 irregular entries recorded in first ten months of 2022
- 42 000 irregular entries recorded in October
- Western Balkan route is the most active
- Western Mediterranean, Eastern Land Border routes see drops in detections

### Top migratory routes:

The Western Balkan route continues to be the most active migratory route into the EU

with more than 22 300 detections in October, nearly three times as many as a year ago.

So far this year, the Western Balkan region has registered the highest number of detections since the peak of the migration crisis in 2015. The high number of irregular border crossings can be attributed to repeated attempts to cross the border by migrants already present in the Western Balkans, but also to persons abusing visa-free access to the region. Some migrants using visa-free access travel through Belgrade airport and then overland towards the EU external borders.

Responding to this extraordinary migratory pressure, Frontex supports the Western Balkan Countries with more than 500 standing corps officers and staff in the region.

Meanwhile, the Central Mediterranean route has seen a 59% rise in the number of irregular border crossings detected in the January-October period, increasing to over 85 000, making this the second most active migratory route into the EU.

In the first ten months of 2022, the number of irregular migrants detected in the Channel stood at 62 000, which represents a 70% increase compared to the same period in 2021, including both attempts and crossings in small boats. This trend is expected to surge before the winter conditions makes more difficult the sea crossings.

Route	January-October 2022	October 2022	October 2021/October 2022	Top nationalities
Western Balkans	128 400	22 318	+159%	Syria, Afghanistan, Turkey
Central Mediterranean	85 000	13 000	+81%	Egypt, Tunisia, Bangladesh
Eastern Mediterranean	35 300	2 862	+10%	Syria, Afghanistan, Nigeria
Western African	14 100	1 803	-50%	Morocco, Senegal
Western Mediterranean	12 300	1 895	-2%	Algeria, Morocco, Syria
Eastern Border	5 229	441	-44%	Ukraine, Iraq, Belarus



## 350 tonnes of dangerous fireworks seized in Germany and the Netherlands



An investigation by the German Regional Police (Landespolizei Osnabrück), the Dutch National Police (Politie) and the Dutch Prosecution Office of Amsterdam (Functioneel Parket), led to the dismantling of a criminal network involved in the illegal trafficking of fireworks. The suspects stored the large and highly explosive fireworks in unsecured locations, posing a serious risk to the safety of those living in the surrounding areas.

The two-year-long investigation exposed a Dutch criminal network involved in the large-scale trafficking of dangerous, highly explosive fireworks. The investigation was initiated in 2020 based on intelligence gained from the Encrochat operation. The Dutch and German authorities' joint investigation uncovered the routes used to transport illegal heavy fireworks from countries such as China across several national borders, including Germany, to reach the Netherlands.

The police are increasingly seeing organised criminal

networks using highly explosive and dangerous fireworks in acts of violence directed against other criminal groups. The explosives are also being used for criminal activities such as ATM explosive attacks carried out in Germany.

Explosives stored dangerously near unsuspecting communities

In October, German and Dutch authorities arrested 11 suspects in total. The three main suspects were arrested in the Netherlands on 17 October. The other eight suspects who were arrested are believed to have played logistical roles, such as facilitating transport, storing the fireworks or acting as a point of contact with buyers.

In June, law enforcement authorities in Germany and the Netherlands raided several locations including suspects' houses, business premises and storage facilities. The German officers uncovered seven sites including bunkers, barns, businesses and containers that were being used for storing the illegal fireworks. The locations were far from meeting the strict safety requirements for the storage of such highly explosive items.

In total, 350 tonnes of illegal heavy fireworks, with a commercial value of up to EUR 25 million, were seized. Stockpiles of cash were also discovered. The investigation into the criminal network and the illegal fireworks is ongoing, and further arrests cannot be ruled out. The fireworks will be destroyed once the investigation is completed.

## Eurojust assists Hungary and Switzerland in dismantling human trafficking network

Judicial and law enforcement authorities in Hungary and Switzerland have dismantled a criminal network involved in trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation. During an action day, four suspects were arrested and four locations searched in the two countries involved. Seizures include a high-value vehicle, and HUF 3

million (approximately EUR 7,300) and CHF 2,000 (approximately EUR 2,000) in cash.

The victims are young Hungarian women from underprivileged backgrounds. The suspects allegedly sent the victims to Switzerland where they were forced to enter into prostitution. The victims were under permanent control of the perpetrators.

## Terrorism intensifying across Africa, exploiting instability and conflict



The growth of terrorism is a major threat to international peace and security, currently felt most keenly in Africa, the deputy UN chief has told the Security Council.

“Terrorists and violent extremists including Da’esh, Al-Qaida and their affiliates have exploited instability and conflict to increase their activities and intensify attacks across the continent”, Amina Mohammed said on behalf of Secretary-General António Guterres.

“Their senseless, terror-fuelled violence has killed and wounded thousands and many more continue to suffer from the broader impact of terrorism on their lives and livelihoods”.

### Spreading terror

With misogyny at the core of many terrorist groups’ ideology, women and girls in particular, are bearing the brunt of insecurity and inequality.

And over the last two years, some of the most violent affiliates of Da’esh have expanded, increasing their presence in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger as well as southward into the Gulf of Guinea.

“Terrorist and violent extremist groups aggravate instability and human suffering. And they can plunge a country emerging from war back into the depths of conflict”, reminded the senior UN official.

### Threatening States

Meanwhile, terrorists, non-State armed groups and criminal networks often pursue different agendas and strategies, fuelled by smuggling, human trafficking and other methods of illicit financing – sometimes

impersonating legitimate armed forces.

And as digital tools spread hate and disinformation, terrorists and other criminal groups are exploiting inter-communal tensions and food insecurity triggered by climate change.

### Globalization of terrorism

In today’s hyper-connected world, Ms. Mohammed reminded that the spread of terrorism in Africa is “not a concern for African Member States alone”.

“The challenge belongs to us all. Countering international terrorism requires effective multilateral responses”, she flagged.

From the climate emergency to armed conflict and poverty and inequality to lawless cyberspace, and the uneven recovery from COVID-19, she also pointed out that terrorism is converging with other threats.

For a holistic, comprehensive approach, the deputy UN chief cited the New Agenda for Peace – part of the Our Common Agenda report.

Amidst increasing polarization, she maintained that it proposes ways to address risks and revitalize our collective peace and security system.

### Pushing back on terror

Outlining five suggestions to advance counter-terrorism efforts in Africa, Ms. Mohammed reminded that “prevention remains our best response”.

“We must address the instability and conflict that can lead to terrorism in the first place, as well as the conditions exploited by terrorists in pursuit of their agendas”.

Secondly, she called for community-based, gender-sensitive “whole-of-society” approaches.

Noting “complex links between terrorism, patriarchy and gender-based violence”, she said counter-terrorism policies needed to be “strengthened by the meaningful participation and leadership of women and girls”.

She underscored in her third point that “countering terrorism can never be an excuse for violating human

rights or international law” as it would “only set us back”.

Fourth, she stressed to importance of regional organisations which can address challenges posed by terrorist and violent extremist groups in the local context.

Finally, Ms. Mohamed called for “sustained and predictable funding” to prevent and counter terrorism.

From economic deprivation to organized crime and governance challenges, “the magnitude of the problem calls for bold investment”, she told ambassadors.

In closing, the Deputy Secretary-General welcomed the planned October 2023 Summit on counterterrorism in Africa as an opportunity to consider ways to strengthen the UN’s efforts across the continent overall.

She expressed confidence that today’s debate would offer insights for the summit, and “help to build peaceful, stable communities and societies across the continent”.

Chairing the meeting with his country assuming the presidency of the Council for November, Ghanaian President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, attested

to the importance of restoring effective State authority and promoting inclusive governance across the continent. He also urged the Council to support AU-led counter-terror operations, including with predictable funding.

African Union (AU) Commission Chair, Moussa Faki Mahamat, drew attention in his briefing, to the daily physical and psychological damage caused by terrorism and reminded that conventional responses and old models are no longer relevant to counter evolving threats on the ground.

And as terrorism extends to new parts of the continent, Benedikta von Seherr-Thoss, Managing Director for Common Security and Defence Policy and Crisis Response with the European Union’s diplomatic wing (European External Action Service) noted the need for security support while underscoring the role of sustainable development for nourishing peace.

Comfort Ero, President and CEO of the International Crisis Group, also briefed the Council, and maintained that technical and military solutions would not end terrorist threats on their own, calling for a new counter-terror toolkit that includes more dialogue with armed groups and can promote local ceasefire arrangements.

## Mozambique Supreme Court makes inroads in the fight against wildlife crimes



In recent years, crimes related to wildlife and the environment have rapidly expanded in the whole Southern African region. Organized syndicates, mainly working with local counterparts, have established highly organized routes to traffic wildlife products to other regions in the world, generating significant profits.

Not only does this problem have devastating impacts on the environment, but the billions of dollars generated by this illegal business are being used to further other nefarious ends. Including money laundering and terrorism financing.

The UNODC, through its Office based in Mozambique, supported an event organized by the Mozambican Supreme Court in Maputo aimed to launch a Benchbook for Judges on Wildlife Crimes.

Testament to increased attention towards the matter, the Benchbook was developed by a team of Supreme Court judges, in collaboration with UNODC.

The instrument is a practical tool to assist Mozambican Magistrates in the performance of their legal duties and responsibilities and aims to raise awareness among the judiciary about the importance of preserving the environment and wildlife in the country.



# AGENCY NEWS AND UPDATES

## Libya signs in Tunisia border cooperation initiative with Sahel, EU states



The “One Desert” initiative was signed between the European Union, Libya and the Sahel region in Tunisia, following a regional conference on cross-border cooperation between Libya and the Sahel countries, organized by the European Union Border Assistance Mission in Libya (EUBAM), in cooperation with the European Union Special Representative for the Sahel region.

The EU Special Representative for the Sahel (EUSR), Emanuela Del Re, said “One Desert” was developed by the EU Mission based on contributions made during the conference in Tunisia regarding cross-border cooperation between Libya and the Sahel states

as well as the relevant actors in the Sahel region and Libya, while the Head of the EUBAM in Libya, Natalina Cea, said that Tunisia’s initiative ended with the signing of a joint declaration clarifying the importance of cross-border cooperation between Libya and the Sahel region.

EUBAM in Libya said in a tweet that the regional conference in Tunisia represented a great opportunity to share lessons and best practices in cross-border cooperation and management, including the valuable contribution that local communities and technology can make to enhance border management and security.

## 1 50 kilos of cannabis from Los Angeles seized at East Midlands Airport



A parcel containing a huge amount of cannabis was seized by Border Force at East Midlands Airport, Nottinghamshire Police has confirmed. The package arrived at the Leicestershire airport after being shipped from an address in Los Angeles, California, and contained 153 kilograms of cannabis inside wrapped packages.

Following the parcel being seized, Nottinghamshire Police carried out a warrant at an address on Hucknall Road in Sherwood, Nottingham, the parcel’s intended destination. Officers arrested four suspects at the property and recovered around £100,000 cash

## 2 Hungarian Police Have Detected Over 250,000 Illegal Migrants So Far

The Hungarian government has revealed that so far this year the country’s police have taken action against more than 250,000 illegal migrants and people smugglers.

Data provided by the government also shows that since last year the numbers have almost doubled, from 109,117

cases recorded between January 1 and November 20, 2021.

According to these data, during the same period this year, 1,730 human smugglers were caught by the police compared to 1,109 in the same period last year.

## **B**order Patrol agents seize over \$1.5 million worth of cocaine at Laredo, Texas border crossing

Customs and Border Protection agents working the World Trade Bridge border crossing in Laredo, Texas, seized almost 119 pounds of cocaine worth over \$1.5 million, the agency announced.

A tractor-trailer manifested as transporting plastic film was referred for a secondary inspection at the World Trade Bridge between Nuevo Laredo, Mexico, and Laredo, Texas.

Following an inspection using a team of dogs, CBP officials found just over 118 pounds of cocaine hidden inside the trailer. The seized narcotics are estimated to have a street value of \$1.5 million."

## **S**tash house with 13 migrants busted



Federal, state and local authorities busted a stash house with 13 migrants,

according to the U.S. Border Patrol.

Laredo South Station agents along with the Drug Enforcement Administration, Texas Department of Public Safety and Laredo police closed down a stash house in south Laredo.

Authorities discovered 13 individuals inside. A records check revealed they were migrants from Mexico and Guatemala.

## **I**ran bolsters border security to prevent 'infiltration'

Iranian state news reports Tehran has sent additional units of special forces to fortify its northern border with Iraq and clamp down on what it says is infiltration by Kurdish opposition groups.

The state run news agency IRNA quoted a top Iranian general saying the additional units were sent to the northern border region to fortify against Kurdish opposition groups and weapons smuggling from Iraq. It is a claim the groups deny and Iran has yet to provide evidence supporting its claims.

## **S**erbian police find 600 migrants after shootout near Hungarian border

Serbian police uncovered 600 illegal migrants near the border with Hungary following a shootout in a town in which one person was shot, the Interior Ministry said.

"Members of the ministry of interior ... started a detailed search after reports that migrants were on the street, shooting at each other," a police statement said.

"(They) have found six migrants, one of whom was around 20-years-old... with two gunshot wounds to the chest."

A police operation eventually uncovered around 600 migrants in the area, including weapons and some of those involved in the shootout, the ministry said in a separate statement citing Interior Minister Bratislav Gasic.

The Western Balkans route via Turkey, Bulgaria, North Macedonia and Serbia remains the main migratory path into the European Union, border agency Frontex said in September.

Many migrants are crossing borders using elaborate networks of smugglers who are sometimes armed.

## **S**ix charged in multinational operation targeting organised criminal networks importing drugs

A joint-agency police investigation into the importation of prohibited drugs has resulted in the seizure of more than \$2.5 million in cash and more than 300kg of methylamphetamine and cocaine.

Detectives from the NSW Police Force's State Crime Command, the Australian Federal Police (AFP), and Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC), established Operation Phobos to target and disrupt serious organised crime in NSW.

As part of investigative inquiries under Strike Forces Cunic and Eos, investigators identified several transnational organised criminal networks (OCNs) working collaboratively to import illicit drugs from several countries into NSW.

During the course of this investigation, Operation Phobebor detectives – with assistance from Australian Border Force (ABF) officers, United States Homeland Security Investigations and other international law enforcement partners – have intercepted and seized about 220kg of methylamphetamine in Los Angeles, bound for Australia, about 60kg of cocaine at a Sydney freight depot concealed inside pieces of machinery, and \$960,000 cash. It's believed the cocaine seized was sourced in Germany.

## **Van Carrying 12 Syrian Immigrants Crashes Into Police Car in Bulgaria**

A minibus smuggling 12 Syrian immigrants has crashed into a police car near the Bulgarian capital Sofia.

Bulgarian officials said that the incident happened, after the driver left the police checkpoint, thus injuring an officer and several passengers, SchengenVisaInfo.com reports.

In addition, the vehicle with the suspicious migrants did not stop at a checkpoint near Sofia, later ramming into the police car.

## **Police in Portugal arrest 35 suspected human traffickers in massive operation**

Thirty-five people suspected of involvement in human trafficking have been arrested in a massive operation that mobilized around 400 officers in

Portugal's southern Alentejo region, Portuguese police said.

A total of 65 raids were carried out, resulting in the arrest of alleged members of a human trafficking ring that illegally brought migrants to work in Alentejo's farms, criminal police agency PJ said in a statement.

The suspects, aged 22 to 58, were both Portuguese and foreign nationals, PJ said, and the victims were from countries including Romania, Moldova, India, Senegal, Pakistan, Morocco and Algeria.

## **Romanian border police find migrants in truck full of chemicals**

Border police in western Romania found 26 migrants from Syria and Turkey trying to leave for the Schengen area in a truck containing hydrochloric acid canisters.

The truck was transporting the chemicals on the Turkey-Germany route, the Arad Border Police said.

The foreign nationals were discovered hidden inside the semi-trailer during a police search. Detailed checks were carried out after officers found the truck had a broken seal during a routine inspection at the border crossing point.

Preliminary investigations show that the truck was driven by a Turkish citizen, while 25 of the migrants were from Syria and one was from Turkey.

Arad Border Police are investigating the driver for migrant trafficking, and

the migrants for attempted fraudulent crossing of the state border.

## **Takedown of online investment fraud responsible for losses of several million euros**



A partnership between the UK government and the Immigration Department of Antigua is expected to bolster the department's capacity to assess risks and detect incidents of fraud, according to Chief Immigration Officer, Katrina Yearwood.

A total of 25 officers from the Immigration Department and the police force – along with their colleagues from Montserrat – participated in an International Immigration Border Security Training, hosted by the British High Commission.

The four-day training programme covered the main immigration risks and threats within the Eastern Caribbean, and offered tools and guidance so participants can adequately address those risks.

"This training segment has been specifically designed to assist us with the detection of fraudulent documentation, which we have seen; it is also here to assist us with detecting imposters, with interview techniques



and my favorite part of this training, behavior assessment,” Yearwood said.

## **ECOWAS Security, Defence Ministers commit to address cross border security issues**



The Ministerial Session of the Accra Initiative (AI) ended in Accra after further deliberations on the need for joint actions by member States to address cross border security issues.

The conference brought together Ministers of Security and Defence of member States of the AI, which are Benin, Ghana, Togo, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Mali and Niger.

Other participants were some representatives of the United Nations (UN) and the Economic Community for West African States (ECOWAS).

Minister for National Security, Mr Albert Kan-Dapaah, said with strong collaboration between African countries, winning the fight against terrorism in the sub-region could be possible.

He stated that the seemingly deteriorating security situation in some African countries did not mean efforts of leaders of the affected countries to combat violent extremism were in vain.

## **Anti-tunnelling exercise along IB on; decline in drone-dropping incidents**

Inspector General of Border Security Force (BSF) Jammu Frontier D K Boora stated that effective measures to check infiltration were taken while anti-tunneling exercise was also underway.

“The Force was equipped with gadgets to detect tunnels or attempts to dig them along the IB,” he said.

IG BSF said that in the past three or four months, there was a perceptible decline in the number of incidents of drone-dropping from Pakistan to smuggle weapons, explosives and narcotics due to effective measures taken by the border guarding force in synergy with other forces.

## **Swiss and French police boost cross-border cooperation**

Switzerland and France are strengthening cooperation between their judicial, police and customs authorities to step up the fight against cross-border crime, Swiss authorities have announced.

“Currently, highly mobile, organised international criminal groups cross borders, commit crimes, and then retreat,” the Federal Office of Police (Fedpol) said in a statement. “Areas near the border serve as a fallback zone for them.”

Dealing with this kind of cross-border crime requires a coordinated approach, it said. Consequently, the head of

Fedpol and the French ambassador to Switzerland agreed to set up a joint working group to examine how to adapt existing police cooperation on both sides.

## **Electronic elements of Poland's anti-migrant border wall with Belarus switched on**



Poland has activated the first section of the electronic barrier, equipped with cameras and motion detectors, on its border with Belarus, built in response to a migration crisis in which tens of thousands of people – mostly from the Middle East, Asia and Africa – attempted to cross into Poland from Belarus.

A physical border wall was completed in the summer, and the electronic elements of the barrier were switched on, announced interior minister Mariusz Kamiński. The remaining sections will be completed by the end of the year.

At a length of 206 kilometres, it will be the longest electronic barrier monitored from a single control centre in the world, says Kamiński. The cost of the project is around 343 million zloty (€73 million), according to his ministry. The physical barrier, on the other hand, was built over a length of 187 km.

# NEXT GENERATION TECHNOLOGY IMPLEMENTATION ESSENTIAL FOR FUTURE BORDER SECURITY SUCCESS

*By Greg Dunbar, Director of Sales at Silvus Technologies, a leading developer of advanced wireless networking communication systems*

Law enforcement agencies and U.S. Border Patrol (BP) have utilized traditional aviation for patrolling broad areas of land for decades. Over the past few years, a variety of emerging technologies have matured to work in conjunction with these established methods. While the use of aviation was initially low tech and focused on searchlights and binoculars, BP

has since advanced to include sophisticated sensor technologies such as Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance (ISR) EO/IR cameras, mapping systems, and Radio Frequency (RF) Microwave systems. However, not every helicopter or fixed wing aircraft in U.S. Border Patrol's Air and Marine Operations (AMO) fleet has yet made this migration, and the majority

of the aircraft patrolling along the border are still using binoculars and searchlights. While these next generation technologies have a high initial cost threshold, they have proven to be a valuable resource for law enforcement and Search & Rescue (SAR) operations who have found them to be a cost-effective investment with increasing success across a variety of border security missions.

Because Customs and Border Protection (CBP) policies can change depending on the current administration and laws enacted by Congress, the political dynamics of protecting the border are complex. However, most CBP personnel will tell you that their world consists of five categories that help them complete their mission each day: legal ports of entry and inland checkpoints, border walls and smart walls, ground teams, and AMO units. All five categories are critical to field operations. When one breaks down, national security, drug and human trafficking, and legal commerce are severely impacted. Until relatively recently, these five categories operated as disparate systems, posing unique challenges to CBP. Thankfully, industry partners and advancing technology is catching up to the problem at hand. With proper execution and adequate budget, CBP can streamline its border security processes by integrating these once disparate systems into a cohesive integrated mesh network that effectively connects all five key elements of border patrol.

The first major element of border security is where the decision makers are posted: CBP Field offices, legal ports of entry, and inland checkpoints. These field leaders need a bi-directional flow of real-time, accurate information to and from field agents to make the best decisions possible for the welfare of the country, officer/agent safety, and the population they interact with daily. This is where mobile ad-hoc networking (MANET) communications technology comes into play. Through MANET technology, field leaders or tactical teams can easily create a self-forming network of high-power radios capable of transmitting & receiving voice, video, and IP data. These radios can be deployed on fixed towers across the border or on vehicles, hand carried by ground personnel, and connected to other assets. In times of crisis, non-fixed MANET radios can be quickly stood up around a situation until the mission is complete, and then simply dismantled back into a man-packable Pelican case.

Walls, both physical and technological, are the second major component of CBP's border security efforts. Physical walls at the border serve a simple function: to slow foot traffic down. Smart walls, on the other hand, consist of technology



methods that agents have used for decades to determine if someone has been in each area, and alert CBP agents and command staff of the traffic's location. As technology has improved, ground sensors and Autonomous Surveillance Towers (AST) have been added to the smart wall's array of technology solutions - with portable AST towers strategically placed along the border, and fixed AST towers continue to be built as budgets allow.

After the smart wall has alerted authorities of activity and the physical wall has blocked entry, it's up to the CBP ground personnel (bush teams, patrol agents, and AMO teams) to do their job and intercept.

As budgets allow, CBP has taken small steps to integrate technology into the ground personnel teams, another critical aspect of secure borders. Using traditional Land Mobile Radios (LMR)





from companies like Motorola, dispatchers can share data with the ground teams over voice. Today, Air units continue to “walk in” bush teams to subjects that are concealing themselves using traditional voice radios. However, with advancing technology comes many challenges, one being that LMR and cellular capabilities do not exist entirely across the borders and there are significant and often widespread gaps in coverage. This is not only an operational problem, but also an officer and agent safety problem. The field offices and dispatchers have access to the ground sensor and AST video feeds, as well as essential AMO video downlink feeds, but for the most part, the agents in the field do not. The field agents are being told what the image shows instead of seeing it for themselves. Historically, this was the best we could do, but not any longer. From this set of challenges is where the concept of the Tactical Bubble was born. Through the Tactical Bubble, surveillance cameras

from fixed or portable AST towers, ground sensors, AMO video downlinks, unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) video downlinks, pole cameras, attic and sweep cameras, body cameras, License Plate Readers (LPR), and other sensor-

based technologies can deliver their imagery and data into the field, no matter where the agent or officer is located along the border. RF MANET mesh technology, make this possible by connecting these smart edge devices to agents in the field. Field personnel have ruggedized computers in their vehicles, and dismounted personnel or those on ATVs, boats, or horseback, have smartphone-based End User Devices (EUDs) that allow officers to access the Tactical Awareness Kit (TAK) software application. With this capability, the CBP ground personnel have immediate actionable visual information, empowering them to react to and make tactical decisions. Sensor based imagery streamed through TAK and connected through MANET radios create a powerful toolset of capabilities that will make CBP more effective operationally, increase officer and agent safety, tighten national security, and safeguard interactions with the population.

You may ask, how should CBP

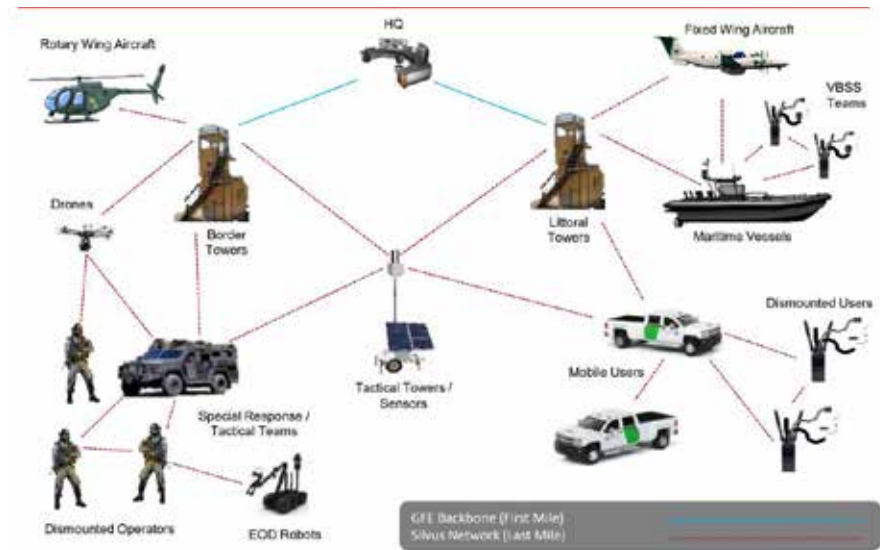
implement this capability and what impact does traditional aviation have to do with it? To solve the communications problem along the border, one must use, as the old saying goes, “the right tool for the right job” and incorporate a hybrid of technologies into border solutions. For example, many of the fixed towers have a high speed backhaul/uplink capability with fiber, high speed microwave, or cellular capabilities. The new Starlink satellite capabilities, as an example, are an interesting part of the solution. Starlink breaks the cost barrier of traditional satellite technology and its “RV” solution’s portability allows for an easy to deploy uplink for the Tactical Bubble. MANET mesh radios provide a



link from the fixed towers out to field deployed devices that can be several miles away. The end user devices can connect to the MANET radios via hardwire Ethernet, Wi-Fi, serial, or USB. Thus, the MANET radios create a meshed fabric that allows the RF signal to go around or over obstacles to get back to the tower and ultimately to a backhaul/uplink connection.

What if there are not any towers in that area of operation that day? Aircraft from the AMO team or UAVs that have MANET radios installed on them, can now act as a “tower in the sky”, or a communications relay, and transmit that RF signal back to a Fixed tower or any other MANET radio in the network within range. Then, the MANET system is smart enough to determine the fastest path with the least resistance to get the data packet to its destination.

By utilizing MANET mesh radio technology onboard CBP AMO aircraft, the video downlink is no longer limited to a single location. Normally, the video feed would have to be ingested into a system and transmitted across the network out to the field if a network connection was available, or an agent would have to verbally communicate what the image depicts. By allowing the AMO aircraft to become part of the Tactical Bubble, the video downlink can be viewed immediately by decision makers at a field office as well as the ground personnel using their vehicles’ laptops or their EUDs with access to TAK. Additionally, the aircraft becomes a communications



relay when overhead in a desolate area of operations. When you tie in tethered drones or Vertical Take-Off and Landing (VTOL) UAV’s, CBP ground personnel gain more operational flexibility and real-time reconnaissance capabilities. Unmanned aerial systems (UAS) companies have routinely integrated MANET capabilities into their airframes for Command and Control (C2), Video Downlink, and Communications Relay applications, making them a natural addition to the Tactical Bubble.

While traditional aviation has historically been a valuable tool for Public Safety agencies, new technologies have an overwhelmingly positive impact on public safety and border security. Unmanned aircraft will continue to add much needed surveillance capability that allows AMO teams to focus on enforcement. Implementing TAK to all ground personnel and scaling the AMO

fleet’s ISR capability in key sectors are critical projects. Additionally, the ISR capability is a tool for SAR operations which is increasingly becoming more common along the borders.

Overall, including MANET mesh technology as the connective thread on all ISR aircraft is the missing component to allow for immediate actionable data to base decisions on in the field. The key to CBP’s success in tightening the security around the border is how these technologies are integrated with each other and tied back into traditional assets, like the AMO aircraft, and creating a sector wide Tactical Bubble. Advanced MANET mesh technology, combined with other recent technology advancements and traditional aviation solutions is the key to creating an efficient, secure, and safe U.S. border.

# NEARLY HALF OF WORLD'S TERROR VICTIMS ARE AFRICAN, WITH ORGANISED CRIME INCREASINGLY ENTRENCHED

*The threat of terrorism and organised crime is becoming increasingly entrenched across Africa, the head of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime told the Security Council, warning that illegal trafficking is depriving millions of a decent livelihood.*

UNODC chief Ghada Waly said there were around 3,500 victims of terrorist acts in sub-Saharan Africa last year, nearly half of those recorded worldwide.

The vast Sahel region in particular has become home to some of the most active and deadly terrorist groups, and it is essential to gain more understanding of the links

between organised crime and terrorism, through rigorous data collection, she added.

The evidence is there that the illegal exploitation of precious metals and minerals such as gold, silver and diamonds, are fuelling the extremists with significant sources of income, and benefitting the groups that control extraction, and



trafficking routes.

She said based on UNODC research, “we have established that illegally mined gold and other precious metals are being fed into the legitimate market, providing huge profits for traffickers.”

Wildlife trafficking has also been reported as a possible source of funding for militias, she added, with the illegal trade in ivory alone generating \$400 million in illicit income each year.

### **Millions exploited**

With a population of around 1.3 billion, almost 500 million Africans were living in extreme poverty during 2021, she told ambassadors.

“This criminal exploitation strips the people of Africa of a significant source of revenue. It robs the millions of people who depend on these natural resources for their livelihoods. And it fuels conflicts and exacerbates instability.”

The climate emergency and the COVID-19 pandemic have also wreaked havoc on already fragile economies across Africa, and illicit trafficking only serves to further jeopardize development and wind back progress on the Sustainable Development Goals.

She said sustainable development would be impossible without peace and stability for the continent, noting that UNODC is “the guardian” of the UN Convention against



Transnational Organized Crime, the main international bulwark against the black marketeers.

### **Battling the networks**

“We support member countries to put in place the policies, legislation, and operational responses required to better address terrorist threats... In 2021 alone, we implemented 25 counter-terrorism projects in Sub-Saharan Africa, with over 160 activities delivered, and trained 2,500 people.”

She told the meeting that in the Sahel today, the UN training workshops are being organized with The UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, to strengthen the understanding and skills of criminal justice officials to work across agencies, share intelligence, and “bring down terrorist networks and those who fund them.”

UNODC also supports ten countries across the Sub-Saharan region to improve their frameworks to counter terrorist financing and money laundering – including in the Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Niger, and Somalia.

Ms. Waly said UNODC was also working to strengthen inter-agency coordination among intelligence services, law enforcement, financial intelligence units and prosecutors.

She said that conflict zones in Africa were being disproportionately affected by illegal mining and trafficking in precious metals.

“Mineral supply chains are often linked to child abuse, human trafficking, forced labour and other human rights violations. With 60 percent of Africa’s population under 25 years of age, young people are both the future of the continent but also its most vulnerable citizens.”

But she said once empowered, young people can become powerful change agents: “They can create a better future and advocate on behalf of themselves and their communities and protect their natural resources.”

### **Empowering youth**

Ms. Waly said she was especially proud of UNODC’s youth-driven, Peace-building project, which in partnership with UNESCO, empowers young people to become ‘weavers of peace’ in the cross-border regions of Gabon, Cameroon, and Chad.

The aim, she said, was to create a network of 1,800 young “weavers of peace”. To enable them to become actors in conflict prevention and peace-building in cross-border regions, and identify alternative ways of making a living for those in vulnerable cross-border communities.

### **Defund the terrorists**

“UNODC remains fully engaged to support Africa’s fight against the criminal trade in wildlife and natural resources”, she assured ambassadors, adding that she welcomed the engagement of the

Council, “to the growing concerns that these illicit revenues are financing terrorist activities and armed groups.”

She said the UN’s crime fighting effort was ready to assist all African in securing their “right to peace, stability, justice and prosperity - for today and future generations. Leaving no money for terrorists. Leaving no one behind.”

## **300 new special surveillance cameras have entered service to strengthen the Romanian border surveillance system**



Adjacent to the damage caused to the state budget, the illegal cigarette traffic fuels other criminal levels, with a cross-border dimension, including that represented by organized crime.

Countering this phenomenon is a priority and permanent objective of the Romanian Border Police, both through its own institutional measures and through collaboration with other state structures or representatives of civil society.

The actions carried out to combat smuggling are reflected in the data recorded by the Novel study, the black market of cigarettes reaching, in July, the lowest level in the last 14 years.

In the first nine months of this year, the border police detained for confiscation over 1.65 million packs of contraband cigarettes, worth approximately 26.6 million lei, as well as significant quantities of tobacco. Practically, approximately 70% of the entire quantity of contraband cigarettes seized at the national level is the result of the actions of the Romanian Border Police. As a result of them, in the same period, several criminal groups specialized in the manufacture and illegal sale of counterfeit cigarettes were identified and destroyed on the country’s territory. In order to maintain the trend of these results, we will continue to adapt our missions, dynamically and in close collaboration with all the factors involved.

However, the positioning of Romania in the vicinity of third countries, where the price of cigarettes is lower, indicates a high level of threat regarding the smuggling of tobacco products.

Efforts to reduce the phenomenon of illegal trafficking will continue as sustained, in collaboration with all the state institutions with powers to combat smuggling, namely the Romanian Police and the Romanian Customs Authority, under the coordination of prosecutors from the competent prosecutor’s offices.

## 44 arrested in Poland in a sting targeting online child sexual exploitation



The Polish Central Cybercrime Bureau (Centralne Biuro Zwalczania Cyberprzestępczości), supported by Europol, targeted child sexual abuse through the setting-up of a special team of police officers in August. The officers, who are experienced in investigating perpetrators involved in the distribution of child sexual abuse material, carried out extensive analytical and operational activities to identify offenders and gather evidence material. The investigations involved other Polish authorities, as well as Europol, the private sector and the National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC).

At the end of October, Polish police officers carried out 82 searches across the country and arrested 44 suspects aged between 18 and 66. The preliminary analysis and the searches led to the identification of 15 500 files of both video and photographic material depicting the sexual abuse of children, and to the seizure of 350 large-capacity digital storage units. Some of the images saved on the seized storage items depicted the sexual abuse of infants and toddlers. As some of the files were encrypted, they will be subjected to further examination once decrypted. The leads gathered during the operational actions have fed further investigations that are still in progress.

Among the arrested is an individual suspected of sexual abuse of two children aged four and five, as well as a second individual who has already served a five-and-a-half-year sentence for sexually abusing minors. The operational activities also led to the possible prevention of the victimisation of a child. During the search of a suspect's house, the officers uncovered correspondence with a 10-year-old boy, which suggests that the adult had obtained the trust of the child for the purpose of his subsequent sexual exploitation. An investigation into a further similar case is now ongoing.

## BOC NAIA foils attempt of gold jewelry smuggling; seizes 24 kg of gold



Port of Ninoy Aquino International Airport (BOC-NAIA) seized at least P80 million worth, or 24 kilos of assorted gold jewelry, hidden inside the lavatory of aircraft PR 301 that arrived from Hongkong.

The Customs Boarding Inspector from the Aircraft Operations Division discovered the jewelry pieces during boarding formalities on the airplane which arrived at NAIA Terminal 2.

BOC-NAIA District Collector Carmelita Talusan has ordered a thorough investigation, including identifying the persons responsible for this smuggling attempt. The Bureau of Customs – Port of NAIA, headed by District Collector Talusan, ensures the stringent implementation of border security measures as directed by Commissioner Yogi Filemon Ruiz. This is aligned with the orders of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to stop smuggling in the country.



## 382 arrests during joint actions against traffickers using the Balkan route



Law enforcement authorities jointly targeted firearms trafficking, drugs trafficking, migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings during coordinated EMPACT Joint Action Days between 26 and 29 October. The actions, which included intensified checks on the EU's external borders, were coordinated by Spain and Europol, and financially supported by IPA/2019.

The operational activities involving 28 countries across Europe were also supported by Eurojust, Frontex, INTERPOL, SELEC and other international organisations. The EMPACT Joint Action Days were planned based on an intelligence-led approach, which involved the cooperation of a wide range of law enforcement authorities including police, customs, immigration agencies and border control agencies.

382 arrests and 130 new investigations

The operational activities mainly took place in the Balkans and Southeast Europe. Other countries from across Europe contributed criminal intelligence and conducted operational actions at the national level. Almost 16 000 officers were involved in the actions on the ground. Simultaneously, between 24 and 29 October, national authorities coordinated special activities that targeted human trafficking networks involved in sexual exploitation, forced begging and forced criminality. The results of these actions will be released in a second communication.

In total, the activities led to 382 arrests of suspects, the majority of whom were alleged to be involved in drug trafficking, facilitation of illegal immigration,

document fraud and the trafficking of firearms. Officers on the ground detected a number of offences related to the facilitation of illegal immigration and related legal violations such as document fraud. The arrests and evidence retrieved has allowed law enforcement authorities to initiate 130 new investigations.

### Overall results:

- 74 924 people checked
- 998 locations searched
- 32 665 vehicles inspected
- 2 004 packages/parcels checked
- 382 arrests: 159 related to migrant smuggling, 112 related to drug trafficking, 38 related to firearms trafficking, 2 related to trafficking and human beings 71 related to other crimes.
- 2 476 illegal entries detected
- Seizures include:
  - 106 firearms: 43 rifles, 42 pistols, 6 air guns, 1 anti-personnel mine, 1 air defense system, 15 grenades, 2 machines for assembling, 2 antitank missiles and 12 250 pieces of ammunition
  - Drugs: 304 kg of heroin, 147 kilograms of cannabis, 5 402 plants of marijuana and 1.3 kg of cocaine
- 130 new investigations initiated

### Drugs and firearms traffickers targeted along the Balkan route

The Balkan route is notorious for its use in a number of crime areas, including migrant smuggling and the trafficking of firearms and drugs into the EU.



Multinational criminal groups source the weapons predominantly from countries in the Western Balkans, where human resources with expertise in firearms are widely available. The firearms are then trafficked to the EU - mainly to Belgium, France, Germany, Spain and the Netherlands. On the other hand, the Balkan route is a key entry point for heroin traffickers, while cannabis and cocaine traffickers also use this transition point.

Drug trafficking and the illegal trade in weapons are closely connected, especially in connection to cocaine trafficking networks. In some cases, criminal networks exchange weapons for drugs. They also use the weapons to gain and maintain control over lucrative drug markets. The illegal market for weapons has remained stable in recent years, both in terms of products offered and intensity of trade. The firearms present on the black market range from old to new military grade weapons. Blank-firing weapons, later converted into real ones, are also an issue. Coordinated activities of national authorities in the Western Balkans contribute to detecting this trafficking and, during the Joint Action Days, led to the interception of both drugs and firearms.

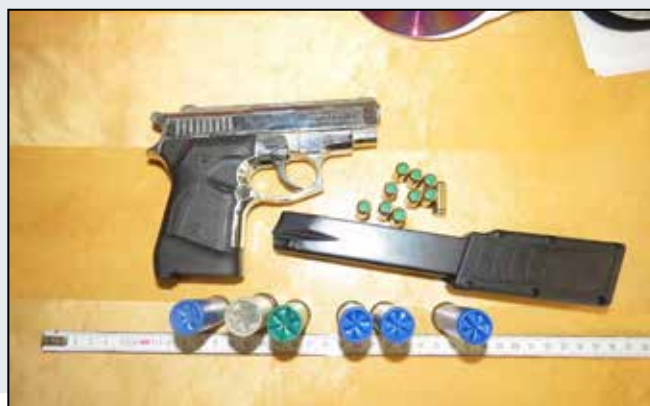
### **Intensified checks to detect trafficking along the Silk Road**

Weapons are often smuggled as part of multi-commodity shipments or hidden in vehicles. This is similar to how drugs are smuggled, examples being cocaine concealed in construction material or fruit shipments, or heroin in hidden compartments in vehicles. Drug traffickers still utilise the ancient Silk Road network of routes to bring heroin to the EU market. Migrant smuggling activities are also intense in these areas.

As an important logistical hub, the Balkan route sees thousands of trucks entering the EU with different goods, including food and construction material. National authorities focused therefore on major entry points. An example is Europe's biggest land entry point - Bulgaria's Kapitan Andreevo checkpoint at the

border with Türkiye - which sees about 1 500 trucks with different goods enter the EU every day. As criminal networks are highly international, their supply chain and markets affect multiple countries and pose a threat to the EU as a whole. Europol's EU SOCTA 2021 outlines that 80% of the criminal networks active in the EU use legal structures to facilitate their criminal activities.

The EMPACT Joint Action Days were made possible through the cooperation of border guards, customs authorities and national units. The exchange of operational information and joint investigations during the operation contributed to more interceptions and the development of ongoing cases. Europol supported the coordination of the EMPACT Joint Action Days and facilitated the exchange of information between the participating countries. During the course of the operation, Montenegro, with the support of the CSC WB IPA 2019 Project, hosted an operational centre to enable the swift exchange of operational information between the participants. A Europol analyst was deployed to the operational centre to provide live analytical support to field operatives. During the action week, Europol also deployed an expert to Bosnia and Herzegovina to facilitate the real-time exchange of communication between the participating authorities. Europol also deployed officers to support the Moldavian authorities. Further support has been provided in the context of the war of aggression against Ukraine to mitigate the threats of arms trafficking into the EU.



# KOGI STATE & NIGERIA BORDER SECURITY

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

Borders are usually defined as geographical boundaries imposed either by features such as oceans and terrain or by political entities such as government, sovereign states, federated states and other sub-national entities. It can also be an artificial line that separates geographic areas.

Borders are Central to a spatial approach to international politics by setting out the location and

arrangement of states and their distances from one another. It facilitates human interaction in conflict and trade, in war and peace.

Borders and Boundary dispute have been a fundamental issue in human history; its solution has been the evolution of different mechanism. There is scarcely any state in Nigeria that has not been involved in boundary dispute, many





*Chairman, Kogi State Boundary Committee and Deputy Governor, Chief Edward Onoja (on the left) and The Executive Governor of Kogi State, His Excellency Alhaji. Yahaya Adoza Bello*

resulted into killings, destruction of human lives. An efficient boundary/ border resolution mechanism is a potent tool for National Security and suppose to be the concern of all peace loving entity going by the role Nigeria plays in peace and security in the sub- region.

We are proud to have Kogi state Nigeria taking a drastic step towards addressing issues of boundary/border conflicts.

Kogi state, located in North Central Nigeria shares common boundaries with Niger state, Kwara, Nassarawa and Federal Capital territory to the North. Kogi is bounded by Benue state to the East Enugu, Anambra State to the South and Ondo, Ekiti and Edo States to the West with tourism potentials. Kogi popularly called Confluence State due to the fact that the Conference of River

Niger and Benue occurs there makes it an inevitable point of reference during strategic decision making towards addressing border conflicts.

Reports confirm a build-up of multiple non-state actors across Northern Nigeria which includes the embattled Boko Haram, Ansaru and now ISWAP. They have found new abodes in Kogi State and Niger State between April and August, 2022 terrorist conducted attacks in Kogi, Niger and some parts of Abuja where many were killed including security personnel (HumAngle September 6, 2022).

International organizations joining Kogi State to complement efforts to overcome security challenges will be a direct assistance to Nigeria going by the relevance of the state to National Development

With the Constitution of KOGI STATE BOUNDARY COMMITTEE saddled with the task of Addressing Boundary Issues and Sustain Peace, I appeal to World Border Security Congress to extend their invitation to the Republic of Northern Macedonia World Border Security Congress where they will liaise with Global Experts to unlock ways to secure Local Border and Boundaries Conflict with Automated Solutions. This will motivate other states in Nigeria to emulate the proactive decision of Kogi State Governor, Alh. Yahaya Bello, towards addressing Boundary Conflicts. It is important for local experts to work with international colleagues to advance the course of ending border insecurity in Nigeria.

# 2023 WORLD BORDER SECURITY CONGRESS: SKOPJE, NORTH MACEDONIA 25<sup>TH</sup>-27<sup>TH</sup> 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.*



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

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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





### 2023 Outline Congress Topics include:

## The threat posed by terrorists and organised criminal groups and their smuggling networks

The links between terrorist groups and organised criminal groups is well known. Both groups utilise many of the same networks and methods to traffic people, weapons (SALW) and drugs, either for financial gain and /or to achieve their political objectives. It is therefore not a great leap of credulity to imagine these channels being used to traffic CBRNe equipment and materials for use as WMD's. So, identifying and closing down these channels is of critical importance for our citizens health and safety.

## Securing maritime borders and combatting maritime crime

Maritime borders are and will remain the most challenging border environment to secure, and not just because the actual border is out at sea or in the 'Blue Borders'. Once the border is crossed you have the sheer length of the coastlines that have to be secured, much of it rugged and inaccessible. But also because of the multi-dimensional nature of a maritime and 'Blue' border. Maritime borders are surface and sub-surface, land, and air, and where each of those environments meet you have a unique set of technical and mitigation problems that need to be solved. This session looks at the issues and some of the solutions.

## Trafficking in human beings & migration-related crime (the migration crisis in the digital age)

Human traffickers are rapacious, ruthless, callous, and unscrupulous, but they are also intelligent, cunning, ingenious and adaptable. This means that wherever a gap or weakness in our borders is closed, they will immediately look to find a new gap to exploit. We have seen this repeatedly but most recently in the Channel where traffickers have switched emphasis from smuggling people through the Port of Dover and Shuttle (of course this is still going on daily) to providing unseaworthy small craft for the perilous journey across the channel. Targeting the traffickers is clearly the best way of tackling the issue, but what can border agencies do to affect this?

## Countering terrorism and cross border organised crime

The links between terrorism and organised cross border crime is long established. How much and how often terrorist organisations and organised crime work together is more difficult to ascertain. We often see news reports about returning terrorist fighters using human trafficking routes to cross borders, but whether this is terrorists masquerading as irregular migrants or direct collusion between organised crime groups and terrorists is difficult to know. This session will look at what we do know about collusion and what we can do to counter it through the use of, for example, Watchlists and biometrics.

## Changing Challenges to Trade and Customs

Trade is the lifeblood of any country's economy and customs duties represent significant sources of revenue for national governments. However, the illegal trade in counterfeit goods, endangered species, cultural heritage continues to pose a major problem to border and customs authorities worldwide and rob countries of both



revenue and in many cases irreplaceable assets. In many parts of the world long, porous borders plus lack of infrastructure and resources, make this problem even more challenging.

### **Continuing development of digital borders and use of data – (including API / PNR on-going developments, travel documents security, and traveller programs)**

As the world moves rapidly towards digital borders with the fully integrated use of API and PNR data, this session brings us up to date with the experiences of the early adopter programmes and implementation and examines these ongoing experiences and lessons that can be shared to help global partners make the transition more seamlessly and cost effectively.

### **Capacity building and training in tough times**

What are we doing to address the skills gaps in our organisations. Once we have identified those skills gaps, how do implement the development, and strengthen the doctrine, skills, processes, instincts, and culture to meet fast changing circumstances.

### **Panel Discussion: Delivering effective border management in uncertain times**

Delivering effective border management in unforeseen circumstances, like COVID19 or the migrant crisis - is it about developing the culture of adaptability, better communications or having the systems, processes, and mechanisms in place to put together quick reaction teams across agencies and national borders? Or is it something else? Corruption of border officials or politicisation of law enforcement also brings its challenges. This panel will discuss what is required to react to what we do not know, knowing what we do!

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## Closed Agency Workshops

FOR BORDER AGENCIES, AGENCIES AT THE BORDER AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ONLY

The World Border Security Congress aims to promote collaboration, inter-agency cooperation and information/intelligence sharing amongst border agencies and agencies at the border to better engage and tackle the increasing threats and cross border security challenges that pertain to today's global environment.

Border agencies and agencies at the border can benefit from the 'Closed Agency Only Workshops', hosted by the Ministry of Citizen Protection, Organization for Security & Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and International Organization for Migration (IOM) with a series of behind closed door discussion and working group opportunities.

This years Closed Agency Only Workshop topics include:

### Continued efforts in information sharing and agency cooperation

*Chair: United Nations Center for Counter Terrorism (UNCCT)*

Information sharing, and inter-agency co-operation are two sides of the same coin. One will not work without the other! But what are the barriers to co-operation and information sharing? Most often they are political, cultural and technical. So, how do we overcome those barriers and implement real co-operation and information sharing?

### Mainstreaming Human Rights into Immigration & Border Management

*Chair: International Organization for Migration (IOM)*

Irregular migration across the world continues and remains a dangerous prospect, especially for women and girls. The OHCHR has developed recommended principles and guidelines on human rights at international borders. These are intended to translate the international human rights framework into practical border governance measures. Part of any practical framework must include improved legal routes for migration as well as strategies to deter irregular migration. It should include swift processing of irregular and regular migrants once they have arrived and an effective and humane returns policy, including detention.

### ID, data sharing and combatting Fraudulent ID

*Chair: Organization for Security & Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)*

Document fraud is one of the major challenges facing border officials worldwide. Fraudulent documents are used in organised smuggling of weapons, drugs vehicles and people. They have also been used in terrorist attacks. Most fraudulent document cases are picked up at airports, but that is probably because airports are where biometrics are most widely used. Sharing data on lost or stolen ID documents is a major weapon in the agency arsenal, but data sharing is key to making this work.

Agency Register is available online at [www.world-border-congress.com/agency-reg](http://www.world-border-congress.com/agency-reg)

Workshops also being held during the Congress will be hosted by the African Union ECOSOCC and UK Counter Terrorism Policing HQ – National Operations Centre (CTPHQ-NOC) - further details available on the website [www.world-border-congress.com](http://www.world-border-congress.com).

Register Online Today at [www.world-border-congress.com](http://www.world-border-congress.com)





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](http://www.world-border-congress.com)

Registration is now open for you to apply for your delegate pass to attend the 2023 World Border Security Congress.



Watch the latest webinar recordings at [www.border-security-report.com/webinar-library](http://www.border-security-report.com/webinar-library)

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## Responding to Conflict Migration Crises

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## The French Government's efforts to fight cross-border crime – the API/PNR case study

View directly at [www.border-security-report.com/webinar-the-french-governments-efforts-to-fight-cross-border-crime-the-api-pnr-case-study](http://www.border-security-report.com/webinar-the-french-governments-efforts-to-fight-cross-border-crime-the-api-pnr-case-study)



## Securing Maritime Borders

View directly at [www.border-security-report.com/webinar-securing-maritime-borders](http://www.border-security-report.com/webinar-securing-maritime-borders)



## Border Management and Gender: Understanding the Crime-Terror Nexus and the Gendered Impacts of Border Practices to Prevent Terrorist Movement

View directly at [www.border-security-report.com/webinar-border-management-and-gender-understanding-the-crime-terror-nexus-and-the-gendered-impact-of-border-practices-to-prevent-terrorist-movement/](http://www.border-security-report.com/webinar-border-management-and-gender-understanding-the-crime-terror-nexus-and-the-gendered-impact-of-border-practices-to-prevent-terrorist-movement/)





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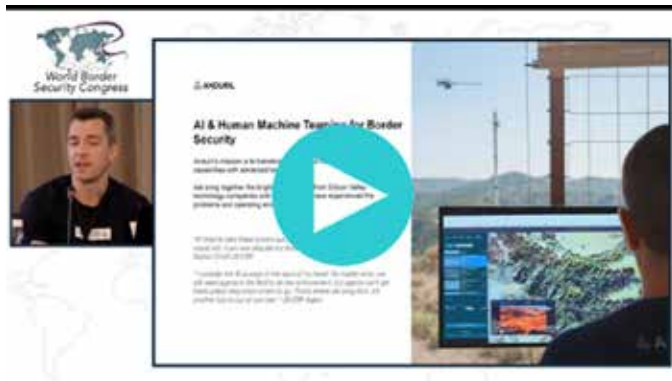
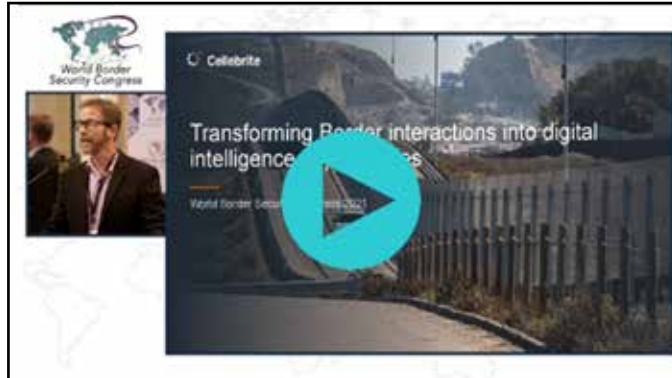
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**Georg Hasse** **Anthony Kingham**



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## US DHS S&T Transitions New Compact Baggage Screener to TSA

A new, compact version of an advanced carry-on baggage screening system is in use at Harry Reid International Airport in Las Vegas.



The new design, developed in part by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Science and Technology Directorate (S&T), allows the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to install advanced screening technology in smaller airports that can't fit conventional systems. The new baggage screening system, also known as a Reduced Form Factor-Computed Tomography (RFF-CT) system, was developed by TSA and S&T's Screening at Speed Program in conjunction with Integrated Defense and Security Solutions (IDSS), headquartered in Boxborough, MA. The advantage of CT screening systems, compared to

older technology, is that they show detailed three-dimensional images of objects inside carry-on bags for transportation security officers to identify most textures and materials, reducing the number of bag checks. "The RFF-CT system is an opportunity to decrease size, weight, and power, making the system more adaptable to smaller security checkpoints common at regional airports," said Dr. John Fortune, S&T's Screening at Speed program manager. "This system is designed to meet the same TSA detection standards as full-size CT systems, while enabling more flexible, passenger friendly checkpoints."

## Vision-Box release their new virtual travel assistant

Vision-Box unveils Avatar, a new and unique life-like virtual travel assistant to help passengers on their way through the airport providing a passenger-centric experience.



Vision-Box unveils Avatar, a new and unique life-like virtual travel assistant to help passengers on their way through the airport providing a passenger-centric experience. Avatar incorporates a human element into the hardware to better connect with passengers, transform and elevate their behavior, aid in their journeys and better communicate the client's brand. For travel and border control markets that want to improve their passenger's experience, Avatar has been developed as the first premium feature on the market that enhances the passenger experience through the

unidirectional interaction and communication of a 3D element to facilitate the use of the seamless gate. The Avatar instructs the traveller as a human would, with actions and instructions making the experience familiar and easy to understand. By creating an emotional link with the traveler, stress levels are relieved and natural collaboration improved leading to better data quality capture. Customization of the Avatar to match the client's brand and image fasten the connection between the traveller and Avatar.

## Smiths Detection launches HI-SCAN 7555 DV dual-view X-ray scanner with enhanced capabilities

Smiths Detection today announces the launch of the HI-SCAN 7555 DV. A dual-view X-ray scanner, the HI-SCAN 7555 DV delivers superior image quality, automatic explosives detection, and a compact footprint, to provide efficient screening in high threat applications.



Equipped with an advanced dual-view X-ray scanning system, the new model offers increased operational efficiency by eliminating the need to re-position or rescan objects. Smart display functions further support the scanner's effectiveness, by facilitating accurate and rapid discrimination between substances. Two 120 Hz 24" monitors expedite image evaluation and reduce motion blur, ensuring that operators can make accurate and fast decisions.

The HI-SCAN 7555 DV

offers an automated explosives detection algorithm as standard, plus a discretionary ECAC EDS CB C1 certified algorithm in combination with optional iCMORE weapons capability to allow for the automatic detection of weapons. The new scanner is compatible with Checkpoint.Evoplus, Smiths Detection's central screening and digital management solution, which offers real-time data, allowing actionable insights and health status monitoring.

## Indra's 'Crow' System Counteracts a Drone Attack During a Demonstration at Unvex

Two small unmanned aircraft take off without authorization in the vicinity of an airbase, putting the safety of the air operations at risk.



The Air and Space Force detects, analyzes and neutralizes the threat in a matter of seconds with the help of Crow, the cutting-edge anti-drone system that Indra presented this week at UNVEX, the flagship event held in Spain for the unmanned vehicle sector, which took place in Seville this year.

The Air Deployment Support Squadron (EADA) of the Air and Space Force was tasked with conducting the exercise and demonstrating to a large number of experts and customers the intelligence and significant capabilities of a state-of-the-art system that's already being used during real military missions of the highest complexity.

On this occasion, its mission consisted of protecting the

runways of a small simulated airbase during which two drones unexpectedly took off just one kilometer away, leaving a short reaction time to neutralize them. The Crow system's high-precision radar immediately detected the intrusion and its optoelectronic systems were able to establish visual contact with them to confirm the threat. At the same time, the system's electronic defence antennas scanned the radio spectrum to determine what kind of link these devices were using. All this information fed the advanced algorithm of Indra's solution, which cross-checked with its data libraries the kind of drone it was dealing with and the most effective countermeasure to be employed.



## The MLT-IRB-170C is the newest release for the portable series from Miltech Hellas

The MLT-IRB-170C is a light handheld (<2.5Kgr), multisensor binocular with a cooled thermal sensor to meet the most challenging operational requirements for situational awareness and target acquisition, providing high quality night and day imagery for military, national security and law enforcement border security applications.



The binocular is thoroughly designed and manufactured to meet the highest standards (MIL-STD-810G, MIL-STD-461F, IP67).

Combined with integrated Laser Rangefinder, for precise measurements of up to 32Km, Digital Magnetic Compass, high-end GPS unit and WiFi and RF capabilities,

it covers portable and deployable mission objectives under the most extreme environmental conditions, without any compromise.

The robust construction with the new innovative design for portability and high image quality.

## Self-service kiosk live testing at Prague Airport in preparation for the EES

The Czech Republic is moving fast forward with their European Entry/Exit System (EES) implementation. Besides a comprehensive EES solution, the focus is also on end users to ensure optimal passenger flow.

For this purpose, the Authority at Prague Airport has installed two self-service kiosks for a live test phase. The objectives of the live test were to validate the usability of the user interface and the impact on real process time. As a part of the project, the Czech Border Police, in collaboration with Prague Airport operator, conducted live tests with travelers who had never used an easykiosk before. The travelers registered the required data themselves at the easykiosk including the questionnaire, where all participants answered and entered all data defined by the local authority. The clear instructions on the easykiosk user interface screen guided the travelers.

As a result, the needed time for the pre-enrollment of EES data including the QA process steps was measured.

The live tests show that the overall duration of the self-service kiosk does not take longer than expected – the average process time is 89 seconds. This figure confirms previously made estimations, which also took data from the pilot projects into account. Due to the intuitive user guidance the capturing of the traveler's biometric data (face image and four fingerprints) worked very well. The live test phase brought the Authority and Prague Airport another big step closer to a successful EES implementation.

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