



**Report on the Ohrid Process on Border Security
and Management
by the Chairman of the Ohrid Border Process**

**Working Table III meeting
Prague, 15 November 2005**

Border security and management related issues remain key components of the dialogue that the European Union (EU) initiated with the five Western Balkan countries in the field of Justice and Home Affairs. The establishment of safe, secure and open borders, in line with the EU acquis and EU model for external borders, is one of the prerequisites for the eventual integration of these countries into the EU.

Since the last Working Table III meeting in Sofia, in May, the four partner organisations met several times to discuss about the future of the process.

On 31 May-1 June, the partner organisations and the five countries met in Vienna for the Intermediate Review meeting and a Brainstorming meeting on the future of the whole process.

The key purpose of this event was first to discuss the presentations delivered by the five countries of the Western Balkans region on the Intermediate Reports on the implementation of the Way Forward Document. They reported on the progress achieved since the 2nd Review meeting in Tirana last October. The overall impression was that some important progress has been achieved since last October, but that in most cases much remains to be done in specific areas.

The second purpose of the meeting was to discuss the options for the future of the process. The merit of the process and its format was once more recognised. The Ohrid Process is in a challenging phase, i.e. the implementation phase and the countries and the partners defined priority areas until the end of 2006, being mainly:

- Completing the handing over of the border control to civilian authorities
- Consolidating and improving the implementation of legal/ judicial frameworks
- Practical training
- Promoting and exchanging best practices with international organisations and amongst regional partners, especially on practical training
- Developing IT&T information systems and financial assistance.

The key words for the remaining period will be implementation and assessment of the quality of implementation.

The partners met again in September, in Brussels, to discuss more in details about the assessment of the process. After some discussions, they provisionally agreed that the assessment of the Ohrid Border Process should be done on two sides:

- Technical aspects: representatives from NATO, OSCE and SP would join the CARDS Assessment Team, therefore benefiting from the Team's findings, but also taking into account the need to assess the implementation of the Way Forward Document, as the basis of the Ohrid Border Process.

- Political aspects: a “special” Review meeting could be organised just after the technical assessment mission. It would bring together high-level political representatives from the 5 countries concerned and partner organisations to discuss the general findings of the assessment process. Technical experts would also attend this meeting.

The partners also agreed that the final report on the assessment process should clearly reflect the Team work, therefore including the views of all partners.

24/10/05

Please note that this report covers the period until the 24/10/05. For further information, please refer to the Minutes of the Third Review meeting, 10-11 November 2005, in Sarajevo.