

BULLETIN

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One Stop Control at the Romanian Borders with Hungary and Bulgaria

During a ceremony that took place today, the 21st of December, 2006, at the MoAI Headquarters, the Agreement between the Romanian Government and the Hungarian Government regarding the application of the Convention between Romania and the Republic of Hungary concerning the road and railway border traffic control, signed on the 27th of April, 2004, respectively the Agreement between the Romanian Government and the Bulgarian Government regarding the one stop border control were signed.

The above-mentioned agreements regulate the control proceedings at the Romanian – Hungarian border, respectively at the Romanian – Bulgarian border, starting with the 1st of January 2007, in accordance with the “one stop control” principle. This principle stipulates the activity of controlling in a single spot, which may be on diagonal, meaning only on the entrance flow in both countries, or in a single location being established on the territory of one of the two states.

The common control with Hungary will be performed at the following **locations**, as shown below:

Border Check Point *Cenad* - Kiszombor – diagonal control;
Border Check Point *Nădlac* - Nagylak – diagonal control for persons, while for goods, on the Hungarian territory;
Border Check Point *Turnu* - Batonnya – diagonal control;
Border Check Point *Săcuieni* - Letavertes (common location on the territory of the Republic of Hungary)- control on the Hungarian territory;
Border Check Point *Vârșand* –Gyula – diagonal control for persons, while for goods, on the Hungarian territory;
Border Check Point *Salonta* - Mehkerek – diagonal;
Border Check Point *Borș*-Artand – diagonal control for persons, while for goods, on the Hungarian territory;
Border Check Point *Valea lui Mihai* - Nyirabrany – on the Hungarian territory;
Border Check Point *Urziceni* - Vallaj – on the Hungarian territory.
Border Check Point *Petea* - Csengersima – diagonal control for persons, while for goods, on the Hungarian territory;

The common control with Bulgaria will be performed at the following **locations**, as shown below:

Giurgiu- diagonal control;
Vama Veche – on the Romanian territory;
Ostrov- on the Bulgarian territory;
Negru Vodă – on the Bulgarian territory.

This European procedure will enhance the act of controlling, allowing the use of all control channels at the own country entrance, depending on the traffic indicators, which will considerably reduce the waiting time and relieve the traffic congestion at border check points.

The Minister Vasile Blaga mentioned again that, according to the European legislation, the exit from Romanian and the entrance to the EU Member States can only be done on the basis of the identity card and not the identity paper (the old “buletin”). The Romanian authorities have sent informing reports regarding the Romanian citizens’ identity card to all EU Member States since June, 2006, so that there should be no difficulties for Romanians to enter the states of the European area.

At the same time, all passport possessors were recommended to keep this travel document about them also, at least for a while, in order to avoid possible inconveniences or travel interruptions during the necessary period of time for the border police of the other Member States to get accustomed with the Romanian identity documents.

According to the current information, Romanian citizens may travel, starting with the 1st of January 2007, on the basis of their identity card, to 22 EU Member States, respectively: Austria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Great Britain, Holland, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Hungary, Czech Republic, Cyprus, and Bulgaria, in the near future.

This year, the Romanian border check points with the two neighboring countries were crossed by over 18 million people – the border with Hungary was crossed by over 15.5 millions, while the border with Bulgaria by over 2.5 million people.

Romanian-British Meeting on Illegal Migration Preventing and Countering

“I want to acknowledge all your merits, a consequence of the effort you have made, and I also want to welcome Romania as a full member of the European Union”, stated Ms. Joan RYAN – Sub-Secretary of State for Migration, Citizenship and Nationality within the Home Office of Great Britain, in a press conference after her meeting with general questor Angel ANDREESCU, Secretary of State within M.A.I.

The two officials addressed different topics mainly focused on preventing and countering the illegal migration and the related risks that this phenomenon arises, such as:

- Ø Developing the bilateral police co-operation programmes, with a view to **the full success of the REFLEX Project**, developed in collaboration with the British immigration authorities, emphasised by the **supporting and extension of the programme until March 2007**.
- Ø The perspective of the **preventive campaign on countering illegal working of the Romanian citizens in Great Britain**, implemented between 13 December 2006 and 31 March 2007 developed by the **Organisation for International Migration and financed by the British Government**.
- Ø The capitalizing on the **sustained support** granted by **Great Britain** to Romania, and in subsidiary, by the Home Office to the Ministry of Administration and Interior, in view of Romania’s EU accession on the 1st of January 2007.
- Ø Strengthening the co-operation in preventing and countering trafficking in drugs and human beings, illegal migration, trans-border organised crime, in all its types.

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For countering the phenomenon of migration, including the one related to the illegal emigration of the Romanian citizens abroad, the Ministry of Administration and Interior – by the means of its responsible units – is taking firm actions for countering this phenomenon.

The issue of countering the Romanian citizens’ illegal migration to Great Britain is mainly tackled by the Reflex Project – Romania, set up in 2002 between Romania and Great Britain, within the Romanian Police General Inspectorate, represented by a common inter-institutional working group.

This project is aimed at improving the data and intelligence exchange, in view of increasing the effectiveness of the fight against illegal migration and human trafficking Romanian people are involved, as regards our relation with Great Britain.

From the very beginning, this working group made efforts with a view to: collecting, developing and analyzing the information related to criminal networks; providing analytic and tactical support to the operational teams; setting up and maintaining the data bases related to illegal migration; developing inter-institutional co-operation on intelligence exchange; drawing up strategic analyses to be provided to the leadership in view of an appropriate resource distribution.

During 2002 – 2005, at central level, the Project “Reflex” Romania contributed to the dismantling of **21 criminal groups, over 130 persons being arrested**.

In March 2005, based on the successes recorded at central level, other 14 Reflex Compartments were set up at the level of all **Organized Crime Countering Squads**, after the same model.

The decision was provided by the “Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Administration and Interior of Romania and the Home Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and the Northern Ireland, on supporting the Reflex Programme by March 2006 and extending it at national level”.

The number of the Romanian citizens returned from Great Britain for having committed different types of crimes within the British territory decreased significantly over the past years. The statistics existing at the level of the Romanian Border Police reveal that, compared to the year 2004 - when 1,577 Romanian citizens were sent back from Great Britain, this number systematically decreased to 1,341 in 2005, and to 810 in 2006.

Between January and November 2006, the Reflex Compartments made a significant contribution to the drawing up of **114 informative packages**, materialized in **117 legal cases**, which are being developed under the coordination of the DIICOT (Directorate for Investigation of Organized Crime and Terrorism cases) prosecutors, in the context of the Project.

These information packages resulted in **convicting 486 persons** (Romanian and foreign citizens) involved in organized crime activity related to persons trafficking and illegal migration, **226** of them being taken in preventive custody.

For the first time in Romania, a successful video connection between Romania and Great Britain was realized, when Romanian witnesses could be heard live in a legal case developing in a British court, in a joint operation of Reflex Project and the British Police.

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“We have set new ways of co-operation meant to result in effective actions for preventing the crimes that the Romanians could commit in Italy and those that the Italians could commit in Romania”, stated Minister Vasile Blaga, Minister of Administration and Interior at the headquarters of M.A.I., during the ceremony of signing the “Co-operation Protocol between Ministry of Administration and Interior of Romania and the Home Ministry of Italy”.

The protocol concluded today regulates the co-operation between the two ministries of interior, in the matters related to the increase of the specific actions meant to strengthen the border surveillance and control as well.

To this end, mixed patrols will be created, which are to include representatives of the Border Police from Romania and Italy, and which are to develop specific activities at the third borders of Romania, as well as at the Italy-Austria border. The results of these patrols will be evaluated periodically and will represent the base for further development of the collaboration in this area.

At the same time, it aims at developing the co-operation between the two police units, the target being an operational one, namely *identifying and retaining the persons involved in illegal activities*, as well as a preventive one, namely *preventing some criminal groups from gathering within the territory of the two states*, in the area of organised crime and itinerant criminal phenomenon (i.e. house breaking).

“I know that the image of the Italian emigrants was much affected by this aspect of the organised crime existing in the two countries and I do not want the image of the Romanians in Italy to be affected in the same way. It is something that we could prevent”, stated the Italian Minister, ***Giuliano Amato***.

In 2006, the Romanian-Italian co-operation in preventing trafficking in persons led to the drawing up of 109 penal files, and to the identifying of 42 organised criminal groups. A number of 265 persons were investigated (out of whom 5 Italian citizens), and 75 were arrested.

The most important operation in 2006 was “Itaro” Operation, developed between 1 November and 11 December, in which 1,798 persons were investigated, out of whom 852 were arrested and 1,051 were expelled in Romania.

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On the 18th and 19th December 2006, ***Mr. Giuliano Amato, Minister of Interior of the Italian Republic***, paid an official visit to Romania, upon the invitation of ***Mr. Vasile Blaga, Minister of Administration and Interior***.

This visit is a consequence of the both Romanian and Italian home ministers’ interest in capitalizing on the significant existing potential of bilateral co-operation in the internal affairs domain, an essential component of the comprehensive process meant to strengthen the strategic partnership between Romania and the Republic of Italy.

The dialogue between Minister Vasile Blaga and Minister Giuliano Amato mainly focused on the following issues:

- the dimension of the Romanian-Italian relationships after Romania’s joining the EU, on January the 1st, 2007;
- the Romanian community in Italy and the Italian one in Romania, considering the new opportunities implied by the relationships between two EU Member States;
- strengthening the bilateral police co-operation in the area of countering the criminal phenomenon in Romania and Italy;
- co-operating in the field of fighting against illegal migration and trafficking in human beings, as well as in the area of border management;
- co-operating in the public administration area.