



CEL BET
CUSTOMS EXPERT TEAM

EMERGENCY SITUATION AT THE BORDER?

Idea of joint management procedure during the emergencies
and peak times at the border crossing point worked out
by CELBET Cooperation Team



BEING PREPARED MEANS WINNING

That's why one of the main activity of the Cooperation team experts was to find a common model of management in an outstanding situations.

Peak time and emergencies at the land border crossing points are the result of a set of external or internal circumstances occurring suddenly or growing in an uncontrolled manner and imposing the decrease of the land BCP's throughput capacity. Nowadays when customs officers of all EU members states are facing the emergency situation border COVID-19 pandemia idea worked out by Cooperation Team seems to be very meaningful.

CELBET Inter-agency and 3rd Country Co-operation Team (Cooperation Team) started the activity from exploring two essential fields:

1. Operational cooperation between Border Guards (BG) and Customs administrations (CA)
2. Practical implementation of the revised EU Guidelines on further development of the cooperation between Border Guard and Customs (updated in 2018) at the national level.

CONTINGENCY PLANNING IS CRUCIAL

Cooperation team experts pointed out that according to the Guidelines, written cooperation document should contain contingency planning at national, regional and local level to increase the response capacity for border control.

Moreover, Cooperation Team explored existing agreements on joint BG and CA management procedure of the emergencies and peak times at the BCP in: Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. Team experts also took experience of Frontex Rapid Intervention Procedure into account.

SIX PILLARS OF EFFECTIVE COOPERATION

Experts defined the main components of joint management:

1. the definition of emergency situations and peak time is single and common;
2. communication channels and contact points at national, regional and local level are detected;
3. jointly agreed balanced BCPs capacity (agreed optimal numbers of vehicles per day);
4. agreed smooth and rhythmic traffic (optimal numbers of vehicles/hour);
5. agreed acceptable queues length before entering the BCP;
6. the responses/actions to emergencies to speed up BCPs' capacity



MODULES OF AGREEMENT

According to the existing practice, experts defined three agreements modules:

1. national agreement between CA and BG from EU Members States
2. international agreement between EU Members States CA and 3rd Country's CA
3. advanced module of international agreement – the agreement between the four partners - EU Members States CA/BG and 3rd Country's CA/BG.

The main objectives of agreements despite the belonging to certain module:

- to ensure continuous flow at the border
- to reduce the number of vehicles awaiting for entry before BCP and waiting next service control at the BCP
- to speed up border controls and border crossing process
- to increase BCP capacity by using available resource for 100% and even more as it is possible
- to increase the permeability of BCP
- to ensure co-ordinated action of CA and BG officials in cases of peak times and emergencies.

CO-OPERATION TEAM BY EXPLORING EXISTING AGREEMENTS ON THROUGHPUT CAPACITY OF BORDER CROSSING POINTS IN ESTONIA, FINLAND, HUNGARY, LATVIA, LITHUANIA, POLAND AND PRACTICAL SITUATIONS FACING IN REAL LIFE, WORKED OUT THE DEFINITION OF EMERGENCIES AND PEAK TIME AT THE BORDER CROSSING POINTS.



TESTING AND ADOPTION

The idea of joint management procedure of the emergencies and peak times at the BCP was presented and promoted to border control authorities from Belarus, Greece, Lithuania and North Macedonia. Greece tested the standard national procedure on 20-27 January 2020 at the border crossing point Evzonoi.

In turn Lithuania and Belarus adopted the advanced module of international agreement and on 4 November 2019 signed the protocol to ensure the uninterrupted flow of vehicles and to increase the throughput capacity of road border control points at the Lithuanian-Belarusian border: [Information published on CELBET website](#)

This protocol provides for coordinated actions by the Customs and Border Guard Services of the two neighboring countries in contingency situations at the local, regional and central level. Contingency measures foreseen in the Procedure are designed and based on the CELBET2 recommendations and the best practices of other EU Member States, following the Guideline.



LATVIA AND POLAND IMPLEMENTED ADVANCED INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION MODEL BY CONCLUDING WRITTEN PROCEDURE AMONG 4 PARTNERS (CUSTOMS AND BORDER GUARD/POLICE FROM EU SIDE AND FROM 3RD NEIGHBOURING COUNTRY) TO INCREASE THE THROUGHPUT CAPACITY OF BORDER CROSSING POINTS AND TO PREDICT/TO ELIMINATE EMERGENCIES AND PEAK TIMES.



The Inter-agency and 3rd Country Co-operation Team

is to ensure both effective cooperation and coordination between customs administrations and border guard/border police and with neighbouring third countries services operating at the BCPs of the EU Eastern and South-Eastern land border.

The team develops and pilots the Customs Administrations and Border Guard shifts management procedure and also explores and implements joint management procedures for the emergency situations at the BCPs. The team supports enhancement of border strips cooperation by unifying approaches of the CELBET Member States to the same neighbouring 3rd country.

The team leader is from Poland. Experts are from Estonia, Greece, Lithuania and Latvia.

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