

VIENNA MIGRATION CONFERENCE 2021

Re-imagining migration partnerships: Challenges, opportunities and strategies

19-20 October 2021

Palais Niederösterreich, Herrengasse 13, 1010 Vienna

How to deliver better migration outcomes along the routes to Europe – now and after the pandemic? This year's Vienna Migration Conference (VMC) focuses on challenges, opportunities and strategies to spur stronger cooperation in key regions in Europe's immediate neighbourhood and the wider world. The crisis in Afghanistan and the pre-existing trends accelerated by the pandemic make constructive dialogue and collective action more pressing than ever. International partnership is a *conditio sine qua non* to address current and anticipated migration crises effectively. Given the pressure to find common ground, this year's VMC puts the spotlight firmly on assessing the current state of play in migration foreign policy and investigates where real progress between key partners can be made.

A series of opening high-level panels focus on current priorities, such as addressing displacement from Afghanistan and the need to create functioning, sustainable African-European migration partnerships. Subsequent expert discussions explore the realities along the key routes to Europe; crisis management at the external border; the future of the European Union amidst a turbulent geopolitical scene; and final reflections on the road ahead in this highly sensitive area of international relations.

The VMC2021 takes on a hybrid format. ICMPD will convene approximately 150 key stakeholders from the migration policy world at Palais Niederösterreich, with online streaming to secure broad outreach and participation despite COVID-19 related travel restrictions.

Day 1: Tuesday, 19 October 2021

08.30 – 09.30 Registration

09.30 – 09.50 Welcome and opening remarks

- Mr Michael Spindelegger, Director General, ICMPD
 - Mr Karl Nehammer, Federal Minister of the Interior, Austria
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09.50 – 10.00 Re-imagining migration partnerships: An introduction to VMC2021

- Ms Malin Frankenhaeuser, Head of Policy, ICMPD
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10.00 – 11.30 Spotlight session on Afghanistan: Challenges, opportunities and strategies

How should the international community respond to the unfolding humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, which is undeniably one of the most urgent issues on the global agenda? In this opening session, speakers discuss strategies for building partnerships that respond to both the ongoing and future situation in Afghanistan and the wider region. The session commences with a high-level dialogue between Dr Abdullah Abdullah and Mr Spindelegger, zooming in on the current crisis situation in the country and how migration partnerships could support collective efforts within the country and the international community. In the second part, we hear about neighbouring Tajikistan's perspective within the regional context, complemented by further reflections from Iran and Turkey.

- Moderator: Mr Michael Spindelegger, Director General, ICMPD

In conversation: Immediate and long-term priorities to address the unfolding situation in Afghanistan

- H.E. Dr Abdullah Abdullah, Chairman of the High Council for National Reconciliation of Afghanistan

In discussion: Strategies for strengthening cooperation in and with the region

- Mr Sharaf Sheralizoda, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tajikistan
 - H.E. Mr Abbas Bagherpour Ardekani, Ambassador, Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Vienna
 - H.E. Mr Ahmet Muhtar Gün, Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Turkey to the United Nations and International Organizations in Vienna
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11.30 – 12.00 Coffee break

12.00 – 12.30 In conversation: Re-imagining migration partnerships with and for Africa

The African Union Commissioner shares her vast experience and offers a vision for Africa's priorities and goals with regard to international migration partnership. In doing so, this conversation revisits the very concept of partnership in light of new (post-)pandemic dynamics, including the roles of migration diplomacy, whole-of-route approaches and humanitarian imperatives.

- H.E. Ms Amira El Fadil, Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development, African Union Commission
 - Mr Michael Spindelegger, Director General, ICMPD
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12.30 – 13.00

In conversation: Connecting the Sahara and the Mediterranean

This conversation explores where we stand on managing mixed migration flows on the Central African and Central Mediterranean Routes. Speakers discuss current shortcomings and opportunities for collaborative approaches to secure better outcomes for migrants crossing from the Sahara to the Mediterranean.

- Mr Vincent Cochetel, Special Envoy of the UNHCR for the Central Mediterranean situation, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
- Mr Martijn Pluim, Director, Migration Dialogues and Cooperation, ICMPD

13.00 – 14.30

Lunch break

14.30 – 15.50

Partnerships in action: Connecting the Eastern Mediterranean and Western Balkan Routes

Ministers from three key countries along the Eastern Mediterranean and Western Balkans routes give their views on deepening cooperation across these routes and in the wider region. How can governments work better together to manage current challenges and future crises, and realise the real opportunities of migration?

- Mr Notis Mitarachi, Minister for Migration and Asylum, Greece
- Mr Selmo Cikotic, Minister of Security, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Mr Péter Szijjártó, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Hungary
- Mr Michael Spindelegger, Director General, ICMPD

15.50 – 16.50

Migration crisis management at the EU's external borders: Geopolitics, preparedness and responses

Panellists debate crisis management at the European Union's external borders: to what degree is the EU prepared for potential sudden increases in arrivals? How does the situation along the borders with Belarus affect efforts to build mutually beneficial migration partnerships with key origin and transit countries? Is the geopolitical 'instrumentalisation' of refugees by Belarus an anomaly, or are we witnessing the emergence of a dangerous new trend?

- Ms Nina Gregori, Executive Director, European Asylum Support Office
- Mr Vladimír Šimoňák, Director, Crisis Management Department, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, Slovakia
- Mr Johannes Luchner, Deputy Director-General, Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, European Commission
- Mr Ralph Genetzke, Director, Brussels Mission, ICMPD

16.50 – 17.30

Coffee break

17.30 – 18.15

Charting forward in a changing global landscape: An armchair debate on Europe's geopolitical challenges

In this session on the future of the European Union, two prominent commentators with extensive experience covering European politics debate the political health of today's EU; how it is coping amid the mounting challenges of a geopolitical world; and what the future holds. This conversation will explore the broader context in which today's migration trends and debates are situated and ask – with reference to recent developments in Afghanistan and other crises – whether Europe still has the agency to influence the world around it.

- Ms Caroline de Gruyter, Correspondent for European Affairs, NRC Handelsblad
- Mr Sébastien Lumet, Director Brussels Office, Groupe d'études Geopolitique, and Editor for Le Grand Continent
- Mr Hugo Brady, Senior Strategic Advisor, ICMPD

18.15 – 21.30

Reception upon invitation of the Mayor and Governor of Vienna, Dr Michael Ludwig

- Welcome remarks by Dr Kurt Stürzenbecher, Member of the City Council and Provincial Parliament of Vienna, on behalf of the Mayor and Governor of Vienna, Dr Michael Ludwig

Day 2: Wednesday, 20 October 2021

08.00 – 09.00

Coffee/Tea

09.00 – 10.20

The Silk Routes in focus: International responses to the unfolding situation in Afghanistan

The turmoil in Afghanistan is directly affecting its immediate neighbours, some of whom are hosting large and long-term Afghan refugee populations, and others who are seeing large numbers of Afghans in transit. This panel discussion explores possible responses to the situation in Afghanistan and in neighbouring countries, as well as implications for migration partnerships with countries in the region.

- Mr Khyber Farahi, former Senior Adviser on Migration Affairs and Development to former Afghan President Ghani / independent expert
- Mr Savaş Ünlü, Director General, Directorate General for Migration Management, Ministry of Interior, Turkey
- Mr Joost Klarenbeek, Special Envoy for Migration, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands
- Mr Kevin J. Allen, Principal Liaison Adviser, Asia and the Pacific, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
- Ms Sedef Dearing, Head of Silk Routes Region, ICMPD

10.20 – 10.50

Coffee break

10.50 – 12.10

The Mediterranean in focus: Joint leadership and shared responsibility for a revitalised approach to partnership

Intensified mixed migration flows in the Mediterranean have made the region the focus of new partnership initiatives in recent years. Countries in the region have increasingly invested in developing their capacity to address a number of migration-related challenges and, perhaps to a lesser degree, seize opportunities. In this context, panellists are set to discuss opportunities presented by the European Union's New Agenda for the Mediterranean and explore innovations that could deepen partnerships with countries along the relevant routes.

- Ms Hamida Rais, Director General, International Cooperation on Migration, Ministry of Social Affairs, Tunisia
- Mr Neville Aquilina, Director General, Global Issues, International Development and Economic Affairs, Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs, Malta
- Mr Ulrich Weinbrenner, Director General, Directorate-General of Migration, Refugees and Return Policy, Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community, Germany
- H.E. Mr Christophe Léonzi, Ambassador for Migration, Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, France
- Mr Julien Simon, Head of Mediterranean Region, ICMPD

12.10 – 13.10

What works, and what doesn't: Closing reflections on the future of migration partnerships

In the final discussion, four veterans of European migration policy debate the way forward for achieving migration partnerships by drawing together the different strands of this year's VMC discussions. What are the necessary next steps if we truly want to revisit – and revitalise – partnership between Europe and its neighbours in managing together the modern migration phenomenon in all its aspects.

- Mr Leo Brincat, Member, European Court of Auditors
- Mr Raoul Ueberecken, Director, Directorate Home Affairs, Directorate-General Justice and Home Affairs, General Secretariat, Council of the European Union
- Ms Monika Sie Dhian Ho, General Director, Clingendael Institute
- Mr Lukas Gehrke, Deputy Director General and Director Policy, Research and Strategy, ICMPD

13.10 – 13.20

Closing remarks

- Mr Michael Spindelegger, Director General, ICMPD

13.20 – 14.30

Lunch

ICMPD strives to ensure an inclusive working environment and be attentive to gender diversity and the plurality of voices represented in our initiatives. When this is not reflected in our events, it is due to the unavailability of speakers or challenges in identifying suitable profiles in our network.