



Vienna Migration Conference 2024

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Europe's leading forum on migration

22-23 OCTOBER

DRAFT PROGRAMME

The [Vienna Migration Conference 2024](#) (VMC2024) convenes on 22-23 October, amidst pivotal events shaping European migration policy. Over these two days, more than 250 decision-makers and migration practitioners from government, international organisations, academia, and civil society will engage in discussions on labour migration, strategies for safer routes and handling irregular arrivals, public sentiment on migration, and the work ahead to start implementing the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum. Informed by recent EU elections and ongoing negotiations to shape the new five-year mandate, this ninth edition of VMC will again be livestreamed, connecting the global migration community to these critical discussions.

DAY 1

TUESDAY, 22 OCTOBER 2024

09.30 – 10.00

OPENING

Welcome

- Michael Spindelegger, Director General, ICMPD

Introduction to VMC2024

- Lukas Gehrke, Deputy Director General and Director, Policy Research and Strategy, ICMPD
- Malin Frankenhaeuser, Head of Policy and VMC Lead, ICMPD

ICMPD's recommendations for the next five years

- Malin Frankenhaeuser, Head of Policy and VMC Lead, ICMPD
- Sarah Schlaeger, Senior Lead Policy and Liaison, Brussels Mission, ICMPD

10.00 – 10.30

KEYNOTE CONVERSATION

The EU's reckoning? Making sense of times of change and crisis

It is a tumultuous year for the future of the EU and the US as the global world order approaches a moment of truth amid sky-high geopolitical tensions. At this grave moment in world history, one of the most clear-eyed and astute observers of European and transatlantic affairs joins VMC to discuss

the political and security challenges the EU must navigate over the coming months, not least sharp divisions over war in Ukraine, climate change, and migration. Is the Union strong enough to survive?

- Ivan Krastev, Founder and Chairman of the Board, Centre for Liberal Strategies

10.30 – 11.00

Break

11.00 – 12.00

MINISTERIAL PANEL

Ambitious but realistic: Prospects for taking migration cooperation to the next level

International partnerships remain a critical tool for effective governance. High-level officials share their views and priorities on cooperation on both sides of the Mediterranean and what it takes to forge sustainable partnerships between countries along key migration routes.

- Gerhard Karner, Federal Minister of the Interior, Austria
- Badr Abdelatty, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Egypt (tbc)
- Nikolaos Panagiotopoulos, Minister of Migration and Asylum, Greece (tbc)
- Abdallah Bou Habib, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants, Lebanon (tbc)

12.00 – 12.30

STRATEGIC DIALOGUE

Uniting across countries and regions in the fight against migrant smuggling and trafficking

Smuggling and trafficking represent the darkest side of international migration. Both crimes have grown into multi-billion businesses causing the most severe forms of exploitation and human suffering, but also eroding the political foundations for a more fruitful governance of migration. Any credible response must transcend national or geographically limited contexts, rest on broad cooperation across borders and regions, and involve a wide range of state and non-state actors. UNODC plays a critical role in this regard as the global actor with the deepest insights and most experience in terms of functioning policy responses. The session discusses measures that have shown effect, the factors that make cooperation work, and the priorities that the EU and its global partners should pursue in the next five years and beyond.

- Ghada Waly, Executive Director, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (tbc)

12.30 – 14.30

Lunch break

13.00 – 13.45

SIDE EVENT

On the brink of a new era: Navigating the future of tech in migration

New technological tools have burst onto the scene in recent years and are considered full of potential in terms of how they can contribute to migration management, whether for border management, integration or asylum placement purposes. At the same time, their use has triggered concerns about the operational, ethical and fundamental rights implications. This event provides a 360-degree review of where we could be going and what to have in mind as we go forward.

- Craig Damian Smith, Co-Founder, Executive Director and Principal Investigator, Pairity
- Marc Geer, Senior Global Operations Director, Fragomen
- Tuba Bircan, Associate Professor, Vrije Universiteit Brussels
- Ashraf Abushady, Senior Advisor on Digital Transformation and Artificial Intelligence, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (tbc)

14.30 – 15.30

PANEL DISCUSSION

The promises of external processing: Between assumptions, possibilities, and practicalities

Hardly any other debate on migration is as controversial as external processing. Proponents are looking to deter and reduce irregular arrivals, opponents point to strong legal, practical and moral reasons against it. Beyond ideological blinders, this panel examines external processing from a scientific, practical, political, and legal perspective, exploring commonalities and defining red lines.

- Henrik Ankerstjerne, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry for Immigration and Integration, Denmark
- Daniel Thym, Chair of Public, European and International Law, Department of Law, University of Konstanz
- Catherine Woollard, Director, European Council on Refugees and Exiles

15.30 – 16.30

Break

16.30 – 17.30

PANEL DISCUSSION

People on the move: Measures to improve outreach and support

With more than 63,000 people dead or missing while migrating in the last decade, the call for safe and legal pathways for migrants and people in need of international protection is growing, globally as well as in Europe. But what options are on the table, and to what degree could US Safe Mobility Offices serve as a blueprint for Europe? This session reviews initiatives and structures designed to reach and assist migrants in different parts of the world and discusses replicability and scalability to address dangerous journeys and facilitate access to pathways.

- Carsten Schmitz-Hoffmann, Director General for Europe, Mediterranean and Central Asia, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH
- Bram Frouws, Director, Mixed Migration Centre
- Sedef Dearing, Director, Migration Dialogues and Cooperation, ICMPD

17.30 – 18.00

ARMCHAIR CONVERSATION

EU migration policy from 2025: The view from Warsaw

Rapidly growing labour migration, tensions on the Polish-Belarusian border, and an influx of 1 million refugees from Ukraine have transformed Poland into an immigration country almost overnight. This session discusses current migration priorities, the future of Ukrainian refugees under temporary protection, and plans for the Polish Council Presidency.

- Maciej Duszczyc, Undersecretary of State, Ministry of the Interior and Administration, Poland

18.00 – 18.30

ARMCHAIR CONVERSATION

Peace, prosperity, and security? Migration and the EU's foreign and security policy

In a rapidly changing geopolitical landscape, characterised by global instability and a volatile international order driven by unprecedented challenges like Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the risks posed by climate change, and the situation in the Middle East, the EU faces key choices concerning its global plan of action and its efforts to engage in strategic diplomacy. The recent migration and asylum policy reforms place particular emphasis on the external dimension, further accentuating that cooperation with key countries and with non-state actors remains pivotal to safeguarding the interests and aspirations of a united Europe.

- Simon Mordue, Deputy Secretary General for Economic and Global Issues, European External Action Service (tbc)

18.30 – 21.00 Reception upon invitation of the Mayor and Governor of Vienna, Dr. Michael Ludwig

19.30 – 21.00 SIDE EVENT – FILM SCREENING

Town of Strangers

Town of Strangers (2018, 80 minutes), directed by award-winning Irish filmmaker Treasa O'Brien, is a 'hybrid' feature documentary that transcends traditional genres, artfully blending documentary and fiction to explore the themes of migration, longing, and belonging. Set in the small town of Gort in Ireland, the film follows a diverse cast of individuals, including migrant workers, travelers, and refugees as they navigate life between two cultures. Through a mix of auditions, observational scenes, and magical realist dream sequences, Town of Strangers delves into their personal stories, capturing the universal human desire for connection, identity, and home. [Watch the trailer](#)

DAY 2

WEDNESDAY, 23 OCTOBER 2024

09.00 – 09.40

ARMCHAIR CONVERSATION

Labour migration pathways: Moving from paper to reality

Recent initiatives addressing labour and skills shortages underscore the need for intricate collaboration to manage labour migration effectively. This discussion explores the transition from policy to practice, focusing on government roles and strategies for cooperation between origin and destination countries, and with the private sector. Senior officials share practical perspectives on fostering effective partnerships, overcoming challenges like skill development, qualification recognition, and protecting workers' rights.

- Md. Ruhul Amin, Secretary, Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment, Bangladesh
- Arshad Mahmood, Secretary, Ministry for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, Pakistan (tbc)

09.40 – 10.40

PANEL DISCUSSION

A reality check on labour migration: Perspectives from the private sector

Employers, particularly SMEs, face significant labour shortages and are exploring global hiring solutions amid challenges like high costs and lengthy visa processing times. In this context, retention becomes paramount, emphasizing the private sector's need to cultivate inclusive workplaces. This panel shares private sector insights on navigating these challenges effectively.

- Representative of Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, European Commission (tbc)
- Lucja Kalkstein, Co-Founder and Group Vice-President, Eryk
- Jo Antoons, Partner, Fragomen
- Julia Olofsson, Global Director of Human Rights and Social Impact, Ingka Group/IKEA

10.40 – 11.30

ARMCHAIR CONVERSATION

Ten building blocks for the Pact: Are we on track for a resourceful and flexible European migration system?

As the gridlock over EU asylum rules has been broken, the EU and its Member States have a very ambitious agenda ahead to make these new commitments a reality by June 2026. This conversation will explore what has changed since the Pact's adoption, where current priorities lie, and what it

will take going forward to ensure a functioning, resourceful, and flexible European migration system.

- Nicole de Moor, State Secretary for Asylum and Migration, added to the Minister of Home Affairs, Institutional Reform and Democratic Renewal, Belgium
- Beate Gminder, Acting Director-General, Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, European Commission

11.30 – 12.00 Break

12.00 – 13.00 PANEL DISCUSSION

From policy to practice: Strategic views on the operationalisation of the migration reform agenda

EU agencies have emerged as an indispensable source of expertise in tackling emerging challenges and providing operational support to Member States in the implementation of comprehensive reforms in justice and home affairs. This session will review the tasks ahead for key EU agencies during this five-year legislative term, in translating the new migration and asylum rules into practice and beyond.

- Nina Gregori, Executive Director, European Union Asylum Agency
- Hans Leijtens, Executive Director, European Border and Coast Guard Agency (tbc)
- Sirpa Rautio, Director, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
- Marili Männik, Executive Director a.i., European Union Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice (tbc)

13.00 – 13.30 CLOSING DISCUSSION

The next five years: Dealing with black swans and staying the course

With the daunting reform task of getting ready to implement the EU Pact underway across the Union, what should be on the agenda as the new Commission starts work in earnest in January 2025? How will governments navigate rising irregular entries and asylum claims whilst trying to attract international talent and essential foreign workers? Have the black swans of the past few years prepared us for what may await around the next corner? What needs to be on our radar for the coming five years?

- Alexandra Cupsan-Catalin, Deputy Head of Cabinet, Cabinet of Commissioner Ylva Johansson, European Commission (tbc)
- Charmaine Hili, Migration and Home Affairs Adviser, Cabinet of President Ursula von der Leyen, European Commission (tbc)
- Hanne Beirens, Director, Migration Policy Institute Europe
- Ana Sofia Walsh, Knowledge Management Director, Fragomen

Closing remarks

- Michael Spindelegger, Director General, ICMPD

13.30 – 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. In any instances where this ethos is not reflected in our events, it is due to the unavailability of speakers or challenges in identifying suitable profiles in our network.

For inquiries or more information, please visit our website at www.vienna-migration-conference.org/vmc2024/ or contact the VMC2024 Team at vienna-migration-conference@icmpd.org.