



# Vienna Migration Conference 2024

Europe's leading forum on migration

22-23 OCTOBER

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**DRAFT  
PROGRAMME**

*Last  
updated:  
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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 New 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.

## List of invited speakers

- Gerhard Karner, Federal Minister of the Interior, Austria
- Badr Abdelatty, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Egypt
- Nikolaos Panagiotopoulos, Minister of Migration and Asylum, Greece
- Abdallah Bou Habib, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants, Lebanon
- Mohammad Ruhul Amin, Secretary, Ministry of Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment, Bangladesh
- Arshad Mehmud, Secretary, Ministry for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, Pakistan
- Maciej Duszczyk, Undersecretary of State, Ministry of the Interior and Administration, Poland
- Nina Gregori, Executive Director, European Union Asylum Agency
- Hans Leijtens, Executive Director, European Border and Coast Guard Agency
- Luca Zampaglione, Executive Director a.i., European Union Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice
- Beate Gminder, Acting Director-General for Migration and Home Affairs, European Commission
- Jens-Christian Møller, Co-Founder and President, Eryk
- Véronique Willems, Secretary General, SMEunited
- Ivan Krastev, Founder and Chairman of the Board, Centre for Liberal Strategies



**DAY 1**

**TUESDAY, 22 OCTOBER 2024**

09.30 – 10.00

OPENING

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 the 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?

10.30 – 11.00

Break

11.00 – 11.45

HIGH-LEVEL 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.

11.45 – 12.30

STRATEGIC DIALOGUE

**Innovation in motion: Scaling up public-private migration partnerships**

Partnering between the public and private sectors is essential to harness the opportunities of migration as a whole-of-society issue. To leverage the potential of human mobility, the private sector brings distinctive skills, expertise, and resources to tackle current humanitarian or economic challenges. This session explores good practices, innovative strategies, and obstacles in scaling up public-private partnerships to address the comprehensive scope of migration cooperation, including skills development and mobility, reintegration and integration.

12.30 – 14.00

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 side event provides a 360-degree review of where we could be going and what to have in mind as we go forward.

14.00 – 15.00

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 provides insights from private sector representatives on navigating these challenges effectively.

**15.00 – 15.30**

**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. Senior officials share practical perspectives on fostering effective partnerships, overcoming challenges like skill development, qualification recognition, and protecting workers' rights.

**15.30 – 16.00**

Break

**16.00 – 17.00**

**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.

**17.00 – 17.30**

**ARMCHAIR CONVERSATION**

**Polarising politics: The challenges ahead for democracies**

Divisive debates on migration in Europe do not exist in a vacuum but are situated in a broader context of increasing polarisation and radicalism across the political spectrum. A battle of narratives on both the global and domestic scenes has made a middle ground increasingly hard to find, with the shift to the right in the recent EU elections and ongoing US presidential campaign cases in point. This spotlight session walks us through some of the most worrying trends on both sides of the Atlantic, and what is needed to overcome them.

**17.30 – 20.30**

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

**DAY 2**

**WEDNESDAY, 23 OCTOBER 2024**

**09.00 – 10.15**

**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.

**10.15 – 11.00**

Break

11.00 – 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 European Commission has a very ambitious agenda ahead to make these new commitments a reality by June 2026. This conversation will explore what has changed for the Commission since the Pact's adoption, where its current priorities lie and what it will take going forward to ensure a functioning, resourceful and flexible European migration system.

11.30 – 12.30

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.

12.30 – 13.30

Lunch

13.30 – 14.00

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 Polish Council Presidency.

14.00 – 14.30

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?

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 contact the VMC2024 Team at [vienna-migration-conference@icmpd.org](mailto:vienna-migration-conference@icmpd.org) or visit our website at [www.vienna-migration-conference.org/vmc2024/](http://www.vienna-migration-conference.org/vmc2024/).