



Vienna Migration Conference 2026

Europe's leading forum on migration

16-17 November



ICMPD
International Centre for
Migration Policy Development

The strategic context

Migration continues to be shaped by fast-moving political, economic, and security developments. Governments are working to maintain credible, resilient, and future-proof systems while responding to shifting realities at home and abroad. In this environment, strategic dialogue and trusted partnerships are essential. The Vienna Migration Conference (VMC) 2026 gathers senior leaders to advance dialogue on effective migration governance in this evolving landscape. Now in its eleventh year, VMC has established itself as a leading platform where political direction and operational realities meet, and where partners can align on priorities and identify opportunities for cooperation.

A convener of diverse perspectives

Each year, more than 250 senior stakeholders from governments, international organisations, the private sector, and expert communities gather in Vienna, making VMC a unique space for strategic reflection and high-level, candid exchange. By bringing together participants from Europe and beyond, the Conference strengthens cross-regional dialogue on shared migration challenges and opportunities. It also fosters the exchange of perspectives from places of origin, transit, and destination in a structured and policy-oriented setting, while injecting analytical insights that contextualise migration policies amidst the bigger picture.

A refreshed structure

In 2026, VMC introduces a revitalised format designed to deepen engagement and broaden impact. The programme will become more dynamic and inclusive, while maintaining the intimate scale that characterises the Conference. The opening day will feature curated, invitation-only events that allow for focused discussion and targeted interaction among a strategically chosen group of participants inside and outside of government. These smaller formats create additional opportunities for in-depth policy exchange, expert dialogue, and purposeful networking, with insights feeding into the next day's plenary debates. The plenaries will be livestreamed to connect participants beyond the room.

A space for connection

Recognising the importance of relationship-building, the programme includes dedicated time and curated spaces for bilateral meetings and informal exchanges. This remains a core element of the VMC experience and a key value for participants. Key outputs, including highlights, thematic articles, and a conference report, will be published after the event, extending the discussion beyond the Conference itself.

Priority themes for 2026

The 2026 programme responds to a shifting policy and operational landscape in migration governance, shaped by evolving geopolitical, economic, and regional dynamics, including recent developments along major migration routes and in Europe's neighbourhood, notably the Middle East. It will assess the resilience of migration systems and the durability of migration partnerships in this context, and how these pressures affect cooperation with partner countries.

Discussions will address whole-of-route approaches, return and reintegration in post-conflict and reconstruction contexts, and the evolving environment for international protection. As implementation of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum advances, the programme will also examine how new frameworks are translated into national practice and operational cooperation. In addition, it will explore the links between labour mobility and broader policy objectives, as well as the expanding role of digital technologies in migration management.

