ICMPD
International Centre for Migration Policy Development

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Vienna Migration Conference 2026

Europe's leading forum on migration

16-17 November

DRAFT PROGRAMME

VMC2026 takes place at a moment of profound geopolitical, economic, and technological change, with far-reaching consequences for global cooperation, mobility, and migration. This year's programme puts these developments at the heart of strategic conversations. Speakers will look at how governments are strengthening border governance and responding to evolving security and protection challenges. The agenda will also tackle the role of human capital in recovery and reconstruction, alongside the implications of ongoing global labour market transitions on mobility. Sessions will further investigate how whole of route approaches are being put into practice and how emerging frameworks, including those shaped by the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, can support more coherent, resilient, and future ready migration systems.

DAY 1 MONDAY, 16 NOVEMBER

13:00 – 14:00 OPENING

Welcome

- Susanne Raab, Director General, ICMPD

Introduction to VMC2026

- Malin Frankenhaeuser, Director, Policy, Research and Strategy, ICMPD
- Justyna Segeš Frelak, Head of Policy and Member States Programme and VMC Lead, ICMPD

Keynote speech

- Magnus Brunner, Commissioner for Internal Affairs and Migration, European Commission

14:00 – 16:30 MINISTERIAL PANELS

Recalibrating migration partnerships in an uncertain world

Geopolitical realignments, evolving strategic interests, and changing domestic priorities are redrawing how states engage on migration. In this high-level panel, political leaders assess how international partnerships are being adapted in response to new security concerns, economic pressures, and shifting policy expectations.

- Bart van den Brink, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Asylum and Migration, the Netherlands

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- Ervin Demo, Minister of Internal Affairs, Albania *(tbc)*
- Gerhard Karner, Federal Minister of the Interior, Austria
- Morten Bødskov, Minister of Immigration and Integration, Denmark
- Badr Abdelatty, Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Egyptian Expatriates, Egypt *(tbc)*
- Alexander Dobrindt, Federal Minister of the Interior, Germany
- Athanasios Plevris, Minister of Migration and Asylum, Greece *(tbc)*
- Jim O'Callaghan, Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration, Ireland
- Kipchumba Murkomen, Cabinet Secretary for Ministry of Interior and National Administration, Kenya *(tbc)*
- Vincent Biruta, Minister of Interior, Rwanda *(tbc)*
- Bakhtiyor Odilovich Saidov, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Uzbekistan *(tbc)*
- Joakim Sevrin Tranvåg Øren, State Secretary, Ministry of Justice and Public Security, Norway *(tbc)*
- H. Ali Özel, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Türkiye *(tbc)*

16:30 – 17:30 **BREAK**

17:30 – 18:00 **ARMCHAIR CONVERSATION**

Migration in 2026: Poland's outlook

Poland's migration landscape has changed rapidly, driven by rising labour migration, continued pressure at the Poland-Belarus border, and the presence of one million Ukrainians under temporary protection. As these developments reshape national priorities and public debates, this conversation takes a closer look at Poland's migration agenda and its perspective as Chair of the ICMPD Steering Group.

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

18:00 – 20:00 **RECEPTION**

Hosted by the Mayor and Governor of Vienna, Dr. Michael Ludwig

DAY 2 TUESDAY 17 NOVEMBER

09:00 – 10:00 **ARMCHAIR CONVERSATION**

The EU's external borders amid increased security and protection challenges

Europe's external borders face an ever more complex mix of security considerations, mobility dynamics, and protection responsibilities. Geopolitical developments, cross-border crime, hybrid threats, technological change, and shifting migration routes are transforming this landscape and call for stronger foresight and preparedness. In this armchair conversation, speakers address how EU agencies, Member States, and partner countries can strengthen operational readiness, cooperation, and resilience to better anticipate and respond to emerging challenges.

- Hans Leijtens, Executive Director, Frontex
- Nina Gregori, Executive Director, European Union Agency for Asylum

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10:00 – 10:30 ARMCHAIR CONVERSATION

Power, politics, people: The new global arm wrestle

Migration policy does not exist in a vacuum. Geopolitical rivalry, economic concerns, and regional conflicts all influence how states manage mobility and engage with partners. Drawing on his extensive reporting across Europe, the United States, and China, David Rennie unpacks the political calculations at play and what they mean for international cooperation and migration governance.

- David Rennie, Geopolitics editor and author of The Telegram column, The Economist

10:30 – 11:00 ARMCHAIR CONVERSATION

Syria: Recovering from 15 years of war and displacement

As Syria enters a new phase, recovery will be critical to supporting displaced populations and fostering long-term stability. This session turns to Syria's recovery and reconstruction priorities in the context of prolonged displacement, from restoring livelihoods to rebuilding institutions. It also considers how regional and international cooperation, together with contributions from the Syrian diaspora, can enable an inclusive and sustainable recovery.

- Mazin Abdellah Hilal Al Farrayeh, Minister of the Interior, Jordan
- Asaad Hassan Al-Shaibani, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, Syria *(tbc)*

11:00 – 11:30 **BREAK**

11:30 – 12:15 PANEL DISCUSSION

Ukraine: Human capital, mobility, and reconstruction

Ukraine's long-term reconstruction will depend in part on how well it can rebuild, and mobilise its human capital in the face of the economic and demographic challenges arising from displacement. Against this backdrop, the panel will examine how investment, labour market policies, skills development, and international partnerships can help rebuild the workforce, bolster economic resilience, and lay the groundwork needed for sustainable recovery and long-term growth.

- Oleksandr Kravchenko, Minister of Economy, Environment and Agriculture, Ukraine *(tbc)*
- Denys Uliutin, Minister of Social Policy, Family and Unity of Ukraine, Ukraine *(tbc)*
- Karl Nehammer, Vice-President, European Investment Bank *(tbc)*

12:15 – 12:45 ARMCHAIR CONVERSATION

Connecting skills and opportunities: Europe-India cooperation on labour mobility

Europe has stepped up its engagement with India on labour mobility, reflecting growing interest in developing structured, skills-based pathways that meet labour market needs while supporting broader cooperation. This conversation puts India's perspective as a key partner at the centre, weighing how cooperation between Europe and India can deliver mutually beneficial outcomes for origin and destination countries, as well as for migrants themselves.

- Sripriya Ranganathan, Secretary (CPV & OIA), Ministry of External Affairs, India

12:45 – 13:30 PANEL DISCUSSION

Workforces in transition: How global shifts are reshaping labour mobility

Political, economic, and demographic pressures are changing where labour is needed and where workers are moving to, across both established and emerging destinations, with knock-on effects for labour markets, skills development strategies, and migration governance. This panel breaks down

how such forces are influencing intraregional labour mobility, labour migration policies, and skills gaps across different regions and globally.

- Namira Negm, Director, African Migration Observatory and Honorary President of the African Society for International Law
- Jean-Christophe Dumont, Head, International Migration Division, Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
- Abdulaziz Harib Altunaiji, Advisor of International Relations, Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation, United Arab Emirates

13:30 – 14:30 Lunch

14:30 – 15:15 **PANEL DISCUSSION**

From dialogue to delivery: Operationalising whole-of-route approaches

Whole-of-route approaches are increasingly promoted as a response to mixed movements, yet translating shared commitments into practical action remains complex. This discussion traces how the concept is moving from broad political ambition to operational reality, and highlights the role of migration dialogues and international organisations in fostering cooperation, building trust, and supporting joint responses among countries of origin, transit, and destination.

- Ugochi Daniels, Deputy Director General for Operations, International Organization for Migration *(tbc)*
- Edem Wosornu, Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees *(tbc)*
- Vincent Waiswa Bagiire, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Uganda
- Khalid Zerouali, Wali, Director of Migration and Border Surveillance, Ministry of the Interior, Morocco *(tbc)*
- Senior representative, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Italy *(tbc)*

15:15 – 15:45 **CLOSING SESSION**

Charting the next steps for European migration governance

Following the implementation of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, attention is increasingly turning from policy design to delivery and long-term impact. This closing session looks ahead to the next phase of European migration governance and offers a strategic perspective on how Europe can craft a more coherent, resilient, and future-ready system, prepared for migration pressures to come.

- Beate Gminder, Director-General, Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, European Commission

15:45 – 16:15 ## Closing remarks

- Susanne Raab, Director General, ICMPD

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 instance 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 or contact the VMC Team at vienna-migration-conference@icmpd.org

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