ICMPD
International Centre for Migration Policy Development

Vienna Migration Conference 2026

Europe's leading forum on migration

16-17 November

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 look at how governments are strengthening border governance and responding to evolving security and protection challenges. The agenda also tackles the role of human capital in recovery and reconstruction, alongside the implications of ongoing global labour market transitions on mobility. Sessions 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

12:00 – 13:00 Light lunch

13:00 – 13:15 OPENING

Welcome and opening remarks

- Susanne Raab, Director General, ICMPD
- Maciej Duszczyk, Undersecretary of State, Ministry of the Interior and Administration, Poland
- Magnus Brunner, Commissioner for Internal Affairs and Migration, European Commission *(video message)*

13:15 – 14:30 HIGH-LEVEL PANEL

Strategic migration partnerships in a changing world

This panel explores whether current migration policies and governance arrangements are fit for an increasingly uncertain and complex world. Ministers discuss how geopolitical developments and domestic political expectations shape migration priorities, how governments can reconcile competing demands such as migration control, international protection, and labour-market needs, and where difficult trade-offs remain. They consider

how to make migration policies more effective, sustainable, and responsive to future challenges.

- Bart van den Brink, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Asylum and Migration, the Netherlands
- Morten Bødskov, Minister of Immigration and Integration, Denmark
- Athanasios Plevris, Minister of Migration and Asylum, Greece
- Jim O'Callaghan, Minister for Justice, Home Affairs and Migration, Ireland
- Mazin Abdellah Hilal Al Farrayeh, Minister of the Interior, Jordan
- Moderator: Susanne Raab, Director General, ICMPD

14:30 – 15:00 Break

15:00 – 16:30 **HIGH-LEVEL PANEL**

From the Atlantic to the Caucasus: How does geography shape migration priorities?

Countries across wider Europe face interconnected migration challenges, yet their geographical positions, migration dynamics, and national priorities differ considerably. Armenia, Norway, North Macedonia, and Portugal offer distinct perspectives in this session, exploring how these differing realities influence national priorities, where common interests emerge, and how European migration cooperation can accommodate different national needs.

Special address

- Ervin Demo, Minister of Internal Affairs, Albania

Panel discussion

- Armen Ghazaryan, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Interior, Armenia
- Zoran Dimitrovski, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, North Macedonia
- Joakim Sevrin Tranvåg Øren, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Justice and Public Security, Norway
- Rui Armindo Freitas, Deputy Minister for the Presidency and Immigration, Portugal
- Moderator: Malin Frankenhaeuser, Director, Policy, Research and Strategy, ICMPD

16:30 – 17:00 Break

17:00 – 18:15 **HIGH-LEVEL PANEL**

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, this panel examines 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.

- Johan Forssell, Minister for Migration, Ministry of Justice, Sweden
- Dariia Marchak, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Economy and Environment, Ukraine
- Maciej Duszczyk, Undersecretary of State, Ministry of the Interior and Administration, Poland

- Moderator: Sedef Dearing, Deputy Director General and Director, Migration Dialogues and Cooperation, ICMPD

18:15 – 18:45

ARMCHAIR CONVERSATION

Neighbours in dialogue: What comes next for migration policy

Austria and Germany share many migration policy priorities while navigating distinct national interests and political expectations. As the EU enters a new phase with the implementation of the Pact on Migration and Asylum, this session examines how national decisions, bilateral cooperation, European frameworks, and global partnerships can be better aligned to make migration governance more coherent and effective.

- Gerhard Karner, Federal Minister of the Interior, Austria
- Alexander Dobrindt, Federal Minister of the Interior, Germany
- Moderator: Susanne Raab, Director General, ICMPD

18:45 – 20:45

RECEPTION

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

- Welcome remarks by Bettina Emmerling, Deputy Mayor and Executive City Councillor of Vienna, and Omar Al-Rawi, Member of the Municipal Council and Provincial Parliament of Vienna

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.

- Nina Gregori, Executive Director, European Union Agency for Asylum
- Hans Leijtens, Executive Director, Frontex
- Moderator: Ralph Genetzke, Director, Brussels Mission, ICMPD

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 and key actors at play and what world order may emerge to replace a crumbling status quo.

- David Rennie, Geopolitics editor and author of The Telegram column, The Economist
- Moderator: Hugo Brady, Senior Strategic Advisor, ICMPD

10:30 – 11:00 ARMCHAIR CONVERSATION

Rwanda's approach to migration: Protection, mobility, and partnerships

Rwanda's approach to migration spans refugee protection and inclusion, regional mobility, and international cooperation. This conversation explores Rwanda's experience in responding to displacement, its approach to facilitating mobility within Africa and beyond, and its evolving international cooperation, including through the Emergency Transit Mechanism and cooperation with European countries on migration management and return.

- Vincent Biruta, Minister of Interior, Rwanda
- Moderator: Romed Perfler, Chief of Staff, ICMPD

11:00 – 11:30 Break

11:30 – 12:00 ARMCHAIR CONVERSATION

Connecting skills and opportunities: Europe-India cooperation on talent 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
- Moderator: Malin Frankenhaeuser, Director, Policy, Research and Strategy, ICMPD

12:00 – 13:00 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, African Society for International Law
- Abdelaziz Harib Altunaiji, Assistant Undersecretary for Communication and International Relations, Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation, United Arab Emirates
- Jean-Christophe Dumont, Head, International Migration Division, Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
- Moderator: Jennifer Tangney, Senior Programme Coordinator, Migration Partnership Facility, ICMPD

13:00 – 14:00 Lunch

14:00 – 15:30 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.

- Neveen Elhusseiny, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Egyptian Expatriates for Migration, Egypt
- Edem Wosornu, Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
- Vincent Waiswa Bagiire, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Uganda
- Arthur Erken, Regional Director, Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia, International Organization for Migration
- Sedef Dearing, Deputy Director General and Director, Migration Dialogues and Cooperation, ICMPD
- Moderator: Nicola Graviano, Deputy Director, Migration Dialogues and Cooperation, ICMPD

15:30 – 16:00 **CLOSING SESSION**

Firm, flexible, future-proof? A conversation on Europe's next migration moves

Following the migration and asylum reform, the EU and its Member States are turning their attention to complementing existing migration governance architecture with policy proposals and operational measures that serve their evolving vision. In this forward-looking exchange, Beate Gminder and Susanne Raab reflect on persisting and emerging migration challenges and how policy ambitions, operational priorities, and financial resources can come together to craft a firmer, more resilient and responsive European migration system.

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

16:00 – 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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