

European Commission Vice-President Schinas & Migration Ministers to feature at Vienna Migration Conference 2023 after highest migration numbers since the refugee crisis

Vienna, 04 October 2023 – The International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) will hold the eighth annual Vienna Migration Conference (VMC) on **10-11 October**. The most important migration conference in Europe will bring together decision-makers and high-level stakeholders from Europe, Africa and Asia ahead of key European and the EU 2024 elections, where, once again, migration will prove a central theme of the global debate.

This year's Vienna Migration Conference comes at a time when Europe is set to receive the highest numbers of irregular arrivals and asylum seekers since 2016's figure of 1.1 million. The continent is also experiencing widespread labour shortages, and the war in Ukraine is not expected to end any time soon, necessitating continued efforts to host and integrate millions of displaced. All these indicators are stark reminders of the international community's need to deepen the dialogue on migration even further and to develop fresh ideas for sustainable action.

The European Commission's Vice-President Margaritis Schinas will kick off the discussion with a keynote address on day one of the conference. He will provide an overview of the state-of-affairs regarding the EU's migration diplomacy and international cooperation, outline the steps the EU has recently taken to devise a more coherent and comprehensive response and share his vision for a better future European migration architecture.

Other high-profile guests include Maria Malmer Stenergard, Minister of Migration for Sweden, Dimitris Kairidis, Minister of Migration and Asylum for Greece, and Susanne Raab, Federal Minister for Women and Integration for Austria, who will take stock of a turbulent year and assess successes and failures in the policy response.

Day two features another day of on-point discussions between European and African government officials, as well as media, private sector and international organisations' representatives. Amongst others, the agenda will feature the likes of Vincent Cochetel, Special Envoy of the UNHCR for the Central Mediterranean, and Jonas Grimheden, Head of the Fundamental Rights Office at Frontex, who will discuss the dual challenge of protecting lives and managing borders, with a special focus on the Mediterranean.

ICMPD's Director General, Michael Spindelegger, says: "We're reaching a real turning point for migration policy in Europe. On the one hand, and not for the first time, we see that the issues of irregular migration and asylum feature very prominently in national election campaigns. A heated

debate on this subject falls together with a discussion on severe and increasing labour shortages in Europe. It is clear that Europe needs a fresh approach that addresses protection and irregular migration in a more promising way, but also prioritises legal pathways to migration and does so in strong partnership with African and Asian governments."

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The International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) is an international organisation with 20 Member States and more than 480 staff members. Active in more than 90 countries worldwide, it takes a regional approach in its work to create efficient cooperation and partnerships along migration routes. Priority regions include Africa, Central and South Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. Its three-pillar approach to migration management - structurally linking research, migration dialogues and capacity building – contributes to better migration policy development worldwide. The Vienna-based organisation has a mission in Brussels, a regional office in Malta and project offices in several countries. ICMPD receives funding from its Member States, the European Commission, the UN, and other multilateral institutions, as well as bilateral donors. Founded in 1993, ICMPD holds UN observer status and cooperates with more than 700 partners, including EU institutions and UN agencies.

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