

Vienna Migration Conference 2017

Closing Speech by ICMPD Director General Michael Spindelegger

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Ladies and gentlemen, dear chairs and panellists, friends and colleagues,

The moment has arrived, after two productive and lively days, to proceed to the conclusions of our event; which – following last year`s example - I want to make very short.

At the Vienna Migration Conference we want to bring together the worlds of big politics, operational cooperation and expertise on migration. We believe that these aspects belong together and are equally important when it comes to the development of partnerships on migration. We started yesterday with the political panel which shed light on the big picture of migration policy development.

Many important points were made. Let me just recall a few of them that resonated the most with us. We heard that our first priority must be to work on perspectives for the young populations. This will cost us some money but how could we spend it better than investing in the future of the younger generations? In order to do so we have to learn how to mobilise private funding to multiply the limited public resources; and we have to move away from a donor perspective to a partner perspective when it comes to economic and development cooperation.

Today we discussed the equally important question of how to make partnership on migration work in practice. The first panel focused on operational cooperation, trying to answer the question how we can respond better and faster to immediate challenges and crises. And in the afternoon we discussed how we can improve our long-term partnership on migration. Many thoughts and excellent ideas were shared

with us. All of them are highly relevant; I just want to provide a short summary of those which made an immediate impression on us

We should stop searching for the “holy grail”, the one solution which solves all problems. Migration is complex and needs complex solutions as well. For short-term challenges we always have to “expect the unexpected” and be prepared for it. For the long-term we need tailor-made approaches for each specific situation. And none of these arrangements can be based on migration alone, they will have to include a whole range of other policy areas and economic cooperation. Thus, we must not forget the demand side. We need to pay much more attention to migrant exploitation and corruption as drivers of irregular migration.

I do not want to take more time now. But I want to assure you that none of the contributions made at this conference will be lost. Like last year we will compile them in a conference report and share it with you. The aim is to finish this process by the end of the year.

But our work will not stop there. The findings of the last two days will shape our policy work for the next year. We will try to further develop all your ideas and proposals, together with our Member States and all our friends and partners. We hope that many of you will participate in this process. And next year we would like to take stock again of the hopefully positive developments.

And this brings me to the very last point on the agenda. Last year we closed the conference with an old Chinese saying that taught us that every journey begins with its first step. This year I would like to quote the British philosopher Bertrand Russell who stated that “*the only thing that will redeem mankind is cooperation.*” We at ICMPD believe that this is how we can come to better solutions. We hope that the Vienna Migration Conference will make a small contribution to this important goal.

All that is left for me now is to thank once more our hosts, *the Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy and the Austrian Academy of Science*. I want to thank all our presenters, panellists and discussants for sharing their know-how and insights with us. And last but not least, I want to thank all of my ICMPD colleagues who made this event possible.

On this note I want to end – to those who still have to travel today, I wish you a safe journey; to those who stay on, enjoy the city of Vienna; to all of you, have a nice evening and thank you very much.