

# Vienna Migration Conference 2018

---

Future Migration Governance  
Reforming Refugee Protection  
Skilled Migration

---

# Content

|                              |    |
|------------------------------|----|
| Opening                      | 03 |
| Speakers                     | 12 |
| Future Migration Governance  | 14 |
| Reforming Refugee Protection | 30 |
| Skilled Migration            | 48 |
| Conclusion                   | 65 |
| Agenda                       |    |

The organisation of the Vienna Migration Conference 2018 was made possible by the support of

**Betreuen. Begleiten.  
Integrieren.**

**ors**

[www.ors.ch](http://www.ors.ch)

# Vienna Migration Conference 2018

AULA OF SCIENCES, WOLLZEILE 27A, 1010 VIENNA  
18–19 OCTOBER 2018

---

**Future Migration Governance**  
**Reforming Refugee Protection**  
**Skilled Migration**

---

# Opening

## Vienna Migration Conference 2018

ICMPD celebrated two anniversaries in 2018. There was the anniversary of the third edition of the Vienna Migration Conference but also the 25th anniversary of ICMPD. **Director General Michael Spindelegger** opened the conference with a short account of the history of the organisation. Twenty-five years ago, Austria and Switzerland had called into life a small organisation for advising governments on migration. The fall of the Iron Curtain had marked a turning point in history, in a few months' time the world became a different place. The end of the East-West conflict started a new era in global politics, but also marked a new era in the field of migration. Europe and the world experienced new opportunities and saw new challenges. Many of them were addressed successfully, some of them remain on the agenda today. Two and a half decades later the small expert organisation has developed into a main player in the migration policy field. Today, ICMPD has seventeen Member States and hopes to welcome more in the future. More than 300 ICMPD colleagues work at the organisation's headquarters in Vienna, in the Brussels Mission and in the regional and local offices in many parts of the world. Thus, ICMPD has abided by one fundamental principle since its early days. ICMPD does not intend to work on its own or for itself, it always wants to work with and for its friends and partners. The Vienna Migration Conference plays a key role in this respect. It is the annual event where ICMPD together with a broad number of guests from politics, research, civil society, international organisations and the media takes stock of the progress that has been achieved during the past year. But it is also an event which allows for an honest and open discussion on areas in which progress was not as good as it should have been. When looking at migration and asylum statistics, one can argue that the situation in Europe has relaxed in 2018 in comparison to previous years. Director General Spindelegger pointed out that this should not lead to the conclusion that the crisis is over. He noted that many important steps have been taken, but Europe and its partners still face major challenges they need to address.

The main purpose of the 2018 VMC was to discuss the progress that has been made in terms of the overall debate on new migration governance but also in terms of concrete policies, measures and attempts to better cooperate at international level. Thus, the theme of the conference "From Crisis Management to Future Governance" was not chosen to imply a linear process from a challenging present to a bright new future. The conference theme intended to emphasise the need for addressing and



We have seen a lot of progress in migration governance in recent years. We should see this as a confirmation that better migration policy is possible. But we should also see it as a reminder of the important things and the difficult things we still have to do.

**Michael Spindelegger**

Director General

International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)

integrating a number of aspects in one and the same process, aspects that have to complement and reinforce each other: crisis resilience, long-term vision, deepening of international cooperation, strengthened institutions and renewed trust from a highly critical public. In view of this, Director General Spindelegger underlined that the path from crisis management to future migration governance will continue to be complex and demanding. A solid foundation has been laid in Europe and abroad and recent years have shown that positive developments are possible that would have been deemed impossible a few years ago. This holds true for the degree of political investment at the highest levels, the intensity and variety of new forms of cooperation and last but not least the resources available to support all related activities. But even in a favourable account, one has to admit that this process is in its early stages and all partners will have to do their best to keep it safe from the risk of derailment.

Against this background, the 2018 VMC aimed at discussing and answering the following questions. In terms of crisis management and future migration governance, have Europe and the international community achieved real progress and if so, in which areas? Where have they failed to achieve progress and why? Have the many initiatives and concepts at national, regional and global levels started to give an impression of what form new migration governance could take? Will it be possible to overcome the political differences that have surfaced in the process? Is the rift between a national and an international stance on the issues of migration and protection closing or widening? How can future migration governance find the acceptance of political audiences and how can it communicate more persuasive messages to gain their support? And finally – what concrete steps should be taken next, both with a view to short-term and long-term migration policy objectives?

In his opening remarks **Lukas Gehrke, Director for Policy, Research and Strategy at ICMPD**, recalled that from its beginnings the Vienna Migration Conference has looked at the various aspects of an emerging foreign migration policy framework in Europe and beyond. The aim of the 2018 VMC was to take these discussions one step further. It should ask how Europe can overcome the crisis mode and together with its partners put in place a governance framework that aims beyond just managing symptoms to addressing the causes of migration as well. This intention also explains the thematic focus of the VMC on refugee protection, labour migration and skills. Individually these topics represent some of the most complex areas of migration, both in their regulatory dimensions and in terms of international cooperation. Usually they are not discussed together. There is a well-established architecture that for good reasons distinguishes between refugees and migrants even though the issues are closely linked. Europe has always had to deal with mixed flows and continues to do so. Today, after some three years of hectic crisis management the number of arrivals in Europe has gone down to pre-crisis levels. One could conclude



We must not only manage the symptoms of the crisis but put in place a governance framework that aims higher, one that focuses not only on the symptoms but is informed by a thorough understanding of global migration, its drivers and its dynamics.

**Lukas Gehrke**

Director, Policy, Research and Strategy, ICMPD

that the crisis has been resolved. However, there is a risk of reducing the efforts required to fundamentally reform and modernise the European and global migration governance systems. More importantly, the underlining reasons, the drivers of migration and migration pressures remain unchanged. In the EU the common migration and asylum architecture is still under construction and the political divide has even widened. The core issue of responsibility-sharing and solidarity remains unsolved. The moral, ethical and legal dilemma of rescuing migrants at sea and the ensuing disembarkation on EU territory is not yet adequately addressed. Thus, the refugee and protection crises have constant media coverage. The effects of dysfunctional legal migration systems are more hidden. In the long run, however, they erode the legitimacy and the credibility of the system just as much. The global economic and geographic disparities produce labour force demand and supply and create opportunities for migrants whether legal or not. Europe needs a reinforced discussion on whether more pathways for labour migration should be created or not and on the extent to which labour migration can address the skills gaps that are reported from a growing number of European employment sectors. In the international context, demands for better access to labour markets are often coupled with demands for more effective cooperation on return and readmission. Both sets of demands represent well-known stumbling blocks of closer partnership between countries of origin and countries of destination. Making progress in the area of labour migration will not only yield economic gains but represents a fundamental political step in jointly managing and controlling migration flows and in building a more sustainable migration governance system.

The European project has come under a lot of pressure in recent years. Among all political decision-makers, **Gernot Blümel, Federal Minister within the Austrian Federal Chancellery for the EU, Arts, Culture and Media**, stressed at the beginning of his remarks that there is unanimous agreement that the topic of migration is crucial for both the current situation and the future of Europe. The migration crisis has shown that the European Union and European leaders have, to a certain extent, lost touch with the public. This alienation is not exclusively driven by migration; it started well before the migration crisis. One part of the explanation is that especially for the younger generations, the European Union has become something they take for granted and do not value that much anymore. The other part of the explanation is that Europe is seen by too many as a project of the elites and not a project of the people. Recent polls show that European citizens have two major concerns. One is the fear of losing prosperity and wealth and the other is the fear of uncontrollable migration flows. In order to save the European project, Minister Blümel stated, Europe and its leaders must focus on solving those two issues first and foremost, as challenging as this might be. People want the European Union to solve the big issues and if the European Union is not capable of doing so, people will not trust it anymore and will not believe in it anymore. This is also the reason



I am very much convinced that people want the European Union to solve the big issues. And if the European Union is not capable of doing that, people won't trust it and won't believe in it anymore.

**Gernot Blümel**

Federal Minister, Federal Chancellery for the EU,  
Arts, Culture and Media, Austria

why Austria chose the slogan “a Europe that protects” for its Presidency of the European Union. This protection comes in three forms: first, providing security and protection against illegal migration; second, protecting prosperity and wealth by deepening the Common Single Market also in digital terms; third, securing stability in the neighbourhood of the European Union, which implies a clear accession perspective for the Western Balkans States. When it comes to migration, the first priority has to be protection against illegal migration. This is one of the big points. If Europe wants to remain without border controls on the inside, it has to focus on external borders. The second important point is to destroy the business model of migrant smugglers, who are a major factor in the current migration situation. The third important point is that Europe has to focus on solutions in cooperation with third countries. There will be no sustainable solution without cooperation with countries of origin. To this end, Minister Blümel concluded, Austria will organise an EU – Africa Forum in December 2018, where European and African Heads of States and the EU institutions will focus on the question of how to strengthen economic ties and how to sustainably improve the situation in countries of origin.

In her keynote **Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission**, stressed that the theme of the 2018 VMC “From Crisis Management to Future Governance” perfectly describes the work the European Union has been doing in recent years. This work is based on the belief that migration can be governed in a humane and sustainable way for both those who are on the move and those who welcome. This principal idea was also the basis for establishing the International Centre for Migration Policy Development 25 years ago, the idea that migration can be a win – win but that it must be managed together through international cooperation and in partnership. High Representative Mogherini recalled the common work that the European Union has done together with ICMPD, such as the cooperation that had started in Valetta three years ago. It marked the first time Europe and Africa agreed that they had a shared interest to work together on migration. Today it can be shown with concrete results that cooperation across borders and across continents is the best way forward. The new partnership among the European Union, the African Union and the United Nations has managed to free over 30,000 migrants from the detention centres in Libya and to allow them to return back home with support to start a new life. Almost 2,000 of them who were eligible for international protection have found refuge in Europe or other world regions. It is a whole new mentality, North and South, East and West, people on the move and host communities together, putting people at the centre of all action. The same mentality is also reflected in the global compacts for refugees and migrants. Thus, all actors have to keep in mind that success in migration governance is measured not by words but by action. The real testing ground of the global compacts will be their implementation. It will require the broadest coalition to build solutions that protect everyone’s rights, the

ones of migrants and refugees but also the ones of host communities, solutions that also close the space for human traffickers and that broaden opportunities for safe and regular mobility. ICMPD was born in an era when walls were falling, High Representative Mogherini concluded, stressing that it can still be shown today that walls are not the answer to the migration challenge and that partnership is the answer and the only way forward.



We will need the broadest coalition to build solutions to protect everyone's rights, from migrants and refugees, as well as for the host communities, solutions that close the space for human traffickers and broaden the opportunities for safe and regular mobility.

**Federica Mogherini**

High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission

**Gernot Blümel** | Federal Minister, Federal Chancellery for the EU, Arts, Culture and Media, Austria

**Eduardo Cabrita** | Minister, Ministry of Internal Administration, Portugal

**Elizabeth Collett** | Special Adviser to the Director General, International Organization for Migration

**Jean-Christophe Dumont** | Head of the International Migration Division, Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

**Malin Frankenhaeuser** | Head of Policy, Directorate of Policy, Research and Strategy, ICMPD

**Lukas Gehrke** | Director, Policy, Research and Strategy, ICMPD

**Ralph Genetzke** | Head of Brussels Mission, ICMPD

**Nina Gregori** | Director General, Internal Administrative Affairs, Migration and Naturalisation Directorate, Ministry of Interior, Slovenia

**Mark Harbers** | Minister for Migration, Ministry of Justice and Security, the Netherlands

**Alfred Höhn** | Leader Government & Public Sector, Europe and EMEA, PricewaterhouseCoopers

**Faizullah Zaki Ibrahimi** | Minister, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Afghanistan

**Adel Jarbouï** | Secretary of State in charge of Migration and Tunisians living abroad, Ministry of Social Affairs, Tunisia

**Yavuz Selim Kiran** | Deputy Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkey

**Cornelia Lüthy** | Vice Director, Head of Immigration and Integration Directorate, State Secretariat for Migration, Switzerland

**Stephan Mayer** | Parliamentary State Secretary, Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community, Germany

**Federica Mogherini** | High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the Commission

**Thomas Mühlhans** | Head of Department National, European and International Migration Strategies, Federal Ministry of the Interior, Austria

**Matthias Oel** | Director, Directorate B - Migration, Mobility and Innovation, Directorate General for Migration and Home Affairs, European Commission

**Grainne O'Hara** | Director, Division of International Protection, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

**Ece Özbayoğlu Acarsoy** | Deputy Director General, Deputy Directorate General for Immigration, Asylum and Visa, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkey

**Maciej Popowski** | Deputy Director General, Directorate General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, European Commission

**Martin Ruhs** | Chair in Migration Studies and Deputy Director of the Migration Policy Centre, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute

**Emilia Saiz** | Secretary General, United Cities and Local Governments

**Michael Spindelegger** | Director General, ICMPD

**Pascal Teixeira da Silva** | Ambassador of France in charge of Migration, Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, France

**Alexander Wilhelm** | Managing Director International Relations, International and Specialised Services, Federal Employment Agency, Germany

# Future Migration Governance

High-level political panel

The first panel gathered high-level political decision-makers from Europe, non-European partners and international organisations. It took stock of last year's developments at the European and global levels and between Europe and its main non-European partners by asking where the international community stands today on its way from crisis management to future migration governance.

**Mark Harbers, Minister for Migration in the Netherlands**, opened the panel by putting migration in the perspective of a wider set of challenges, most importantly demographic and economic imbalances that are part of the circumstances leading to the current European and global migration patterns. Thus, moving from crisis management to future governance will be not a clear and linear affair, there is quite a distance and depth to overcome. Europe is not in a crisis of numbers anymore but in a situation where it still has not found a common sustainable and crisis-resilient answer for the decades ahead. Migration governance should create a situation where politics domesticates management and prevents crises from happening. Governance needs migration to get politicised in conjunction with demography, economic imbalances, and democratic values and principles. Thus far, the EU is still not moving fast and far enough towards finding structural solutions. The Common European Asylum System is locked in by political disagreement and EU Member States have lost the balance between responsibility and solidarity. The lack of structural approach to disembarkation in the Mediterranean results in an atmosphere of continuous crisis and reduces the willingness to find proper solutions. The Member States around the Mediterranean deserve more support from the rest of the EU, the problem of secondary movements needs to be solved, and in the area of return the tendency of EU Member States to act bilaterally with countries of origin has to be overcome. What should be done to address these shortcomings? Minister Harbers called for focusing on a comprehensive approach. In terms of its internal dimension the main priority is to harmonise the European Asylum System. It should be crisis-resilient and should prevent secondary movements and "asylum shopping". Europe needs to strengthen the external borders and seriously cooperate with non-EU neighbours, with all countries of transit and origin based on real partnership, bearing in mind all the questions that these countries have and that they and Europe might perhaps be able to solve together.

Due to its history, Portugal considers itself a country of migration. The Portuguese society perceives migration as something historically natural that it should live with and that it should anticipate and prepare for. **Eduardo Cabrita, Minister for Internal Administration in Portugal** sees a strong consensus in the Portuguese society that in the near future, say in the next ten years, Portugal will need migrants to develop the country, students for its universities, skilled people in certain technological areas, and workers for many other areas. Most European countries will have to face their own demographic challenge. Portugal considers the global compacts on migration and refugees very important for this debate. The EU should continue to work together to have



We should seriously cooperate with our non-EU neighbours, with third countries, all the countries of transit, all the countries of origin and it should be a real partnership, bearing in mind all the questions that these countries have and that we perhaps can solve together.

**Mark Harbers**

Minister for Migration, Ministry of Justice and Security, the Netherlands

a Europe without internal borders and to secure European borders on the outside. But it should also work on paths for legal migration. And it should anticipate arising needs. Portugal needs 50,000 additional people each year to maintain its current population. For this reason, one priority is to cooperate with neighbouring countries, especially African countries. That will also be a priority of the Portuguese Presidency of the European Union. But Europe needs to look ahead as well. It should work on education, on health care and on investment in African countries. Working on a comprehensive approach that links the management of migration flows with cooperation on development is the only way to be successful in the long term. In the short term and within the EU there should be a comprehensive approach matching responsibility with solidarity. There should be a stable and permanent system offering answers to the problem, the control of migration flows. It should be pragmatic, and countries might not participate in these programmes in the same way. Ultimately, however, there should be a global and permanent European solution, that will be the only solution.

Germany is the European country that has received the most refugees by far since 2015 in absolute numbers. Addressing this issue, **Stephan Mayer, Parliamentary State Secretary in the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community of Germany**, stressed that although Germany is one of the main countries of destination in Europe, the issue is by no means a primarily German task or challenge but indeed a European challenge. Thus, it is important to acknowledge the steep decline in the numbers of irregular migrants arriving in the EU over the last three years from 1.8 million to less than 100,000 persons. There has been success and it is due to the European Union making much progress within the last three years. The agreement between the EU and Turkey is one of the key pillars of this success. But in view of the expected demographic developments there is a clear need for developing a common and coherent answer and approach within the European Union. There is the priority issue of stopping illegal migration and the criminal smugglers and human traffickers. There should be a common European objective to harmonise the European legal asylum framework, especially in order to stop secondary movement within the European Union. There must be the common objective to strengthen the external border of the European Union and to strengthen Frontex. All of this is necessary, State Secretary Mayer emphasised, but it will not be sufficient. The EU needs a Common European Asylum System but is unfortunately very far away from finding a coherent position among its Member States. Emphasis should be placed on cooperation with transit countries like Libya, Egypt or Tunisia. There should be agreements with these countries similar to the EU – Turkey Agreement. Cooperation should also be intensified with countries of the Sub-Saharan region, like Niger, Chad, Senegal or Mali, which are all very important for Europe. The third pillar is the cooperation with countries of origin. State Secretary Mayer expressed his conviction that this cooperation has to encompass a broader set of issues, for instance the idea of visa liberalisation for countries who are willing to readmit their nationals when requested.



I consider the EU – Turkey Statement to be very important. I am also convinced that we need similar agreements with Tunisia, with Libya and with Egypt.

**Stephan Mayer**

Parliamentary State Secretary, Federal Ministry of the Interior,  
Building and Community, Germany



We should have a global and permanent European solution, discuss that and work on that with the European Commission. That is the only solution.

**Eduardo Cabrita**  
Minister, Ministry of Internal Administration,  
Portugal



Has the “Joint Way Forward between Afghanistan and the EU” worked? Were we able to deliver on our commitments on it? Today, I can proudly say that, yes, we do believe that we have delivered and we do believe that this cooperation model has worked.

**Faizullah Zaki Ibrahim**

Minister, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Afghanistan

Visa liberalisation, legal pathways and economic investment need to be part of negotiations with these countries on migration management and control.

European migration governance will succeed best if it also addresses the challenges and priorities of non-European partners. The government of Afghanistan has defined security, governance, and economic and social development as its main priorities.

**Faizullah Zaki Ibrahimi, Minister of Labor and Social Affairs of Afghanistan**, shared his views on the extent to which cooperation between his country and the EU has supported these priorities but also on what needs to be done in the future. In 2015 Afghanistan faced two major migration-related issues at the same time, the need to readmit and reintegrate millions of Afghans back in the country and the wish to cooperate with a strategic ally, the European Union, on tackling irregular migration. The situation pushed the Afghan government to make the migration issue a top priority. A High Council for Migration was formed, which is chaired by President Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai, and a national priority programme (NPP) for the displaced and for returnees was created where all government and international stakeholders combine their efforts and resources to follow an integrated policy. The main purpose of the NPP was to combine development programmes with humanitarian needs because a lesson learnt was that a humanitarian response alone is not enough for tackling the problems of returnees. Sustainable reintegration needs to embed returnees in all development programmes. Ultimately, the whole national budget was made reintegration responsive. All ministries are obliged to have one clause in their budget on how they would respond in case of a mass return. Minister Ibrahimi was also part of the delegation that negotiated the "Joint Way Forward between Afghanistan and the EU" and other bilateral agreements. His verdict is that these agreements have indeed worked for both sides. Since 2016 and after the signing of the "Joint Way Forward" the irregular flows from Afghanistan to Europe have decreased dramatically. The flow of voluntary returnees from Turkey, who are the potential irregular migrants to Europe, has increased dramatically from Turkey back to Afghanistan. The number of voluntary returnees from Europe is several times higher than the number of forced returnees. All of this shows that the "Joint Way Forward" has worked. However, the question is whether the successful cooperation between Afghanistan and the international community has really brought closer the fundamental settlement of the issue of irregular migration in and from Afghanistan. Unfortunately, Minister Ibrahimi stated, the answer would have to be negative. The reason is that there is still a lack of incentives to stay at home, paramount among them job creation, skills training and the support of small businesses. Minister Ibrahimi underlined that Afghanistan is very grateful for the EU's investment in skills development in the country but the efforts are still fragmented, small and overlapping. Afghanistan encourages the EU to pool funds, unite resources and invest in a fundamental reform of the Afghan national vocational training system, and finally to seriously rethink the possibility of creating legal channels of migration as an alternative to the illegal one.



We know that during crisis it is a more challenging task, however, it is our joint responsibility to overcome any difficulties and find a way to honour our commitments to humanity.

**Yavuz Selim Kiran**

Deputy Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkey

Turkey continues to shelter the world's largest number of refugees. At the same time Turkey cooperates closely with the EU on migration issues, with the so-called EU – Turkey Statement as the most prominent expression of this cooperation. **Yavuz Selim Kiran, Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Turkey**, emphasised that his home country is exerting every effort to make the lives of refugees in Turkey better. Together with municipalities and NGOs the Turkish government has spent more than 32 billion USD for their needs. It has provided shelter, food, non-food items, education and psychosocial support to them. Moreover, Syrians have the right to legally work and blend into the Turkish society. This is a token of Turkey's belief that everyone should be free and equal and deserves to live in dignity. Against this backdrop, Turkey has developed a new vision that shapes its policies. This vision has three main pillars. First, to protect the lives and dignity of migrants and refugees. It is clear that during a crisis this is a more challenging task, however, it is the joint responsibility of the whole international community to overcome any difficulties and find a way to honour its commitments to humanity. Also the 18 March Agreement between Turkey and the EU should be seen in this light. The agreement aims to save lives, dismantle smuggler rings and replace irregular migration with regular migration. So far it has been very successful. But this success has to be continued and both sides implementing the agreement should abide by their commitments. The second pillar of the vision is to address the root causes of migration and displacement. Peacefully settling disputes, developing democracy throughout the world and enabling a culture of harmony are sine qua non for a better world, lasting peace, stability and welfare. Furthermore there should be more means and additional ways to help people in need in their home countries. This can be achieved through increasing humanitarian and development aid. Creating legal pathways for migration is the third pillar of Turkey's vision. This requires a common understanding and joint efforts all over the world. Turkey believes that migrants enrich the countries they live in. They contribute to the economic, social and cultural life of host countries. They are enablers for sustainable development. Therefore, the international community should focus on creating more legal pathways for migrants so they do not have to risk their lives on migratory routes. All actors should think out of the box and work on innovative ways such as circular migration and approaches involving the private sector.

**Adel Jarbouï, Secretary of State in Charge of Migration and Tunisians Living Abroad of the Ministry of Social Affairs of Tunisia**, pointed out that Tunisia had faced its own migration crisis in 2011, four years before Europe. Due to the beginning of the Libyan war, more than 1 million people crossed the border and came to Tunisia. In 2017, after a national consultation, Tunisia adopted a national migration strategy that rests on five main pillars. The first pillar is to reinforce governance of migration management. The second pillar is to work towards guaranteeing the rights and other interests of Tunisians living abroad. The third pillar is to reinforce the contribution of migration to social and economic development at local, regional and national level. The fourth



If we want the decisions at global level to work, they need to be answering to local needs because if people arrive in countries they do not arrive in a country, they arrive in our streets, in our cities.

**Emilia Saiz**

Secretary General, United Cities and Local Governments



We make strong efforts to control our border and to limit irregular migration, but we need the help of our European partners to support us on regular migration and on investment in Tunisia.

**Adel Jarbouï**

Secretary of State in charge of Migration and Tunisians living abroad, Ministry of Social Affairs, Tunisia

pillar is to promote regular migration and to prevent irregular migration. The fifth pillar is to protect the rights of migrants and refugees in Tunisia. Moreover, in 2016 the Tunisian parliament approved a law related to the prevention and repression of trafficking of people. A draft law on asylum is also under discussion. As regards tackling irregular migration, the Tunisian government succeeded in detecting more than 300 irregular migrants in 2018. The government also succeeded in stopping more than 9,000 migrants who were attempting to cross the Mediterranean. Tunisia understands the problem, Secretary of State Jarbouï concluded, as well as the security challenge its European partners face. Tunisia makes strong efforts to control its borders and to limit irregular migration, but it needs the help and support of its European partners in this fight but also in terms of investment in Tunisia in order to tackle youth unemployment as the most important driver of migration.

Migration governance is often discussed purely from a state perspective but when it comes to the realities of migration and displacement one has to be aware of a basic fact. Migration is an urban phenomenon; the majority of migrants and refugees live in cities. And the city and local levels are the closest to all migration-related aspects, from reception to integration. **Emilia Saiz, Secretary General of UCLG, the World Organisation of United Cities and Local Governments**, concluded the panel by bringing up the perspective of her constituency, cities. Unlike states, cities do not have borders that could shield them against migration. Migrants do not appear as a technical category but as real people who need to be integrated as neighbours in their new environment. Cities cannot contain anything, they are on the receiving end of things, whether they like it or not. The 25,000 cities that are part of UCLG have many different views on the issue of migration but they all can agree on one thing. Local governments need to play a strong role in the global discussions on migration governance because migrants and refugees will end up in cities, requiring the services that citizens of cities need regardless of whether they have the necessary permits for being there or not. Local governments need to be at the table together with national governments thinking and rethinking the way migration is governed. There are things that national governments do much better than local governments but there are other things that local governments do better. The only way to change the nature of migration, while keeping it orderly, while being fair, while respecting the principles that many of the national governments rightly defend, is to make sure that all the actors are sitting at the table and local governments need to be one of those actors. If the decisions at global level are to work, they need to answer to local needs because the local level is where people arrive and where they will live. It is vital that the sphere of government that is closest to the citizens is also sitting at the table to contribute, to test ideas, to make mistakes and to find solutions. There are many things that local governments know how to do well and building communities is one of them.

## CONCLUSIONS

- ➔ All panellists confirmed that migration is one of the biggest political challenges of our time. In conjunction with the issues of prosperity and stability, migration is one of the policy areas where citizens and voters expect their governments to deliver and where actual or alleged failure puts into question the legitimacy of whole political systems.
- ➔ There was wide agreement that the European Union has achieved substantial progress in recent years. But there was also agreement that it has not moved far and fast enough when it comes to finding structural solutions to the issues of migration and displacement.
- ➔ The harmonisation of the Common European Asylum System is still considered a main priority. The system should be crisis-resilient, prevent secondary movements of asylum seekers and ensure access to protection. However, panellists concluded that the EU is very far away from finding a coherent position on the matter among its Member States.
- ➔ In other relevant areas, coherent positions do exist, namely when it comes to securing the external borders, investing in partnerships with non-EU countries, creating legal pathways for migration to cope with demographic ageing and skills shortages, and further promoting cooperation with transit countries and countries of origin. In this regard the EU – Turkey Statement was praised for its efficacy and identified as a Good Practice that should be duplicated in other contexts.
- ➔ Panellists from outside Europe stressed the need to intensify the cooperation on skills development and vocational training to create opportunities for the young populations in countries of origin and thereby tackle a main root cause of irregular migration. There is also the need to better align return and reintegration with development policies.
- ➔ Peaceful settlement of disputes and the development of democracy throughout the world are considered equally important to address another set of main root causes of displacement and irregular migration, namely war, civil war and violent conflict.
- ➔ As a final conclusion, it was emphasised that in order to work at global level, all decisions also must answer to local needs. It is vital that the sphere of government that is closest to the citizens is also sitting at the table to contribute, to test ideas and to find solutions.



Sound migration policies cannot be developed in a vacuum. They need cooperative arrangements if we are to better manage migration.

**Jonathan Prentice**

Chief of Office, Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for International Migration, United Nations

## GLOBAL COMPACT ON MIGRATION

The second day of the conference was opened by **Mr Jonathan Prentice, Chief of Office, Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for International Migration, United Nations**, who presented the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, namely the text the UN Member States had agreed on in the context of the United Nations General Assembly in July 2018 and that was to be formally adopted in December 2018 in Marrakesh. The compact process dates back to September 2016 and the New York Declaration where the Member States decided for the first time to tackle the question of international migration. This decision was based on the recognition that sound migration policies cannot be developed in a vacuum but need cooperative arrangements. The text of the global compact comprises in essence the entire narrative arc of the migratory phenomenon. The compact is broken down into 23 objectives looking at such issues as the factors that compel people to move, the need for better data, ways to enhance the ability of legal pathways, promoting ethical recruitment and labour standards, combatting trafficking, saving lives, managing borders, harnessing contributions migrants make to development, strengthening consular services, and improving international cooperation to facilitate safe and dignified returns. One of the foundations of the global compact is its 360 degree vision, that it should not prioritise one aspect of migration policy over another. The 23 objectives are underpinned by ten guiding principles. They focus on issues such as placing people at the centre of every aspect of the global compact, its predicament on international cooperation and national sovereignty, and on the rule of law. Mr Prentice emphasised that the compact is not set out to promote migration. Rather it acknowledges migration's reality and its benefits when properly managed. The compact essentially promotes a system of order over one of disorder. The compact does not deal with either refugees or internally displaced persons. Finally, the global compact is not legally binding. It imposes no new obligations on Member States. Its relevance is rooted in the elaborate and extensive process that led to its development and that brought the issue of migration in all its dimensions before the United Nations for the first time. Ultimately, Mr Prentice pointed out, the success of the migration compact will be a question of partnerships. The coherence it is beginning to establish will need the support of the UN Member States.

# Reforming Refugee Protection

Panel I

The Conference's next panel gathered experts from Slovenia, Austria, France, Turkey, the European Commission, UNHCR and IOM to explore the issue of reforming refugee protection from a European and global perspective. In particular, the panel asked about the discussants' take on the role of protection in an overall governance framework, the shortfalls of the current system and the priority areas for improving it.

**Malin Frankenhaeuser, Head of Policy at ICMPD**, kicked off the discussion by presenting figures on EU citizens' attitudes towards European asylum and migration policies and asking the question whether these policies have really lost touch with the European public, whether there is a lack of confidence in governments to manage crises and whether there is a common political basis for moving forward based on EU citizens' shared attitudes and perceptions. The 2018 Euro Barometer survey confirmed that EU citizens consider immigration one of the top two priorities facing the EU and their national governments. However, when asked about their personal situation, people seemed to be much more concerned about rising prices and the cost of living. A survey by the Pew Research Centre conducted in 2018 for ten EU Member States found that a majority of respondents were in favour of taking in refugees from countries where people are fleeing violence and war but at the same time disapproved of the way the EU was dealing with the refugee issue. Obviously, Ms Frankenhaeuser pointed out, there is a mismatch between the expectations EU citizens have of their governments when it comes to managing migration and displacement and the ability of these governments to act accordingly or to communicate their views and actions successfully. Against this background Ms Frankenhaeuser invited the panel to discuss a number of principal questions. When thinking beyond crisis situations, at which level should the future European Union asylum policy be determined - at state level or at EU level? Where should applications for asylum in Europe be accepted - mainly outside the EU, at the EU external borders or in EU Member States? And finally, in which direction should the European and global protection system go?

**Nina Gregori, Director General at the Directorate for Administrative Affairs, Migration and Naturalisation of the Slovenian Ministry of Interior**, started her statement with the observation that there are basically five points on which everybody in the European Union can agree. Although these points are politically delicate they still have wide support in the institutions and in the Member States. The first point is to better protect the external EU border. The second point is to reach a Common European Asylum System that provides short and efficient asylum procedures, stops secondary movements but still offers protection to the people who are in need of it. The third point is to stop organised crime, people smuggling, and the trafficking in human beings. The fourth point is to have an effective return policy and the fifth point is to open more legal pathways for people to come to Europe. The goals are quite clear but the challenge has been the same for many years: How can these goals



Can migration governance move forward without further EU reform? I think that is a question that we will have to try to take into consideration.

**Nina Gregori**

Director General, Internal Administrative Affairs, Migration and Naturalisation Directorate, Ministry of Interior, Slovenia



If we are to trust opinion polls, a majority of EU citizens support taking in refugees from countries where people are fleeing violence and war but disapprove of the way that the EU is dealing with the refugee issue.

**Malin Frankenhaeuser**

Head of Policy, Directorate of Policy, Research and Strategy,  
ICMPD

be reached? There are many different players in the European Union and beyond, all having different answers to these questions. The decision-making process in the European Union is quite complicated and Ms Gregori pointed out that it is perhaps time to start seriously thinking about whether European migration governance can really move forward without further EU reform. When it comes to the Common European Asylum System and the issue of refugee protection, Ms Gregori highlighted as a first point the need for a system that would enable short and efficient asylum procedures capable of clearly distinguishing between those who are in need of protection and those who are using the asylum systems for other purposes. The second point pertains to a legal framework and mechanism for crisis situations, and the third point to an effective return policy.

**Thomas Mühlhans, Head of Department for National, European and International Migration Strategies from the Federal Ministry of the Interior of Austria**, recalled the importance of a pragmatic approach that focuses the discussion about the reform of the current Common European Asylum System on those points where all EU Member States have more or less common positions. At the same time Mr Mühlhans stressed the need to rethink the global protection system as a whole. The current asylum system based on the 1951 Geneva Refugee Convention with its very important and highly appreciated values is a system that was established for a non-globalised world with different means of communication and mobility. In today's globalised world migration flows span continents and refugees try to receive protection in countries thousands of kilometres away from their home or the next safe havens. The core idea of the Geneva Convention, however, is to offer refugee protection in the next safe haven, and the European policy on protection should go back to this core idea. Thus, Europe should move from a purely "reaction mode" to an "action mode". That is why Austria together with Denmark put forward in October 2018 a vision paper depicting new goals for a better protection system in a globalised world. A new and better protection system should help those who need help the most, who are the most vulnerable, that is the first point. The second point is to create perspectives in regions of origin and in the countries of first protection instead of enabling irregular migration to Europe. The third and fourth points are to prevent further deaths in the Mediterranean and along other migratory routes and to break the business model of traffickers and smugglers. The fifth point is to guarantee an effective management of the EU external borders and to ensure that all individuals staying illegally in Europe leave the European Union. The sixth point is to promote common but differentiated responsibility-sharing. The seventh and final point is to establish resettlement as a tool to help the most vulnerable once all other points have been implemented.

The debate on reforming refugee protection should not forget to mention that despite the persisting problems, a lot has been done over the last three years to make the European system better prepared for coping with external crises. This point was



We have to create perspectives in regions of origin and in the countries of first protection instead of enabling irregular migration to Europe.

**Thomas Mühlhans**

Head of Department National, European and International Migration Strategies, Federal Ministry of the Interior, Austria

stressed by **Pascal Teixeira da Silva, Ambassador of France in charge of Migration, Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, France**, before he turned to those points where continued efforts will be needed. According to Ambassador Teixeira da Silva, any reform of the European asylum system has to address the main points where the system is not working well: the misuse of the asylum systems by those clearly not in need of international protection, low return rates of those not in need of protection, and the flaws of the Dublin System causing large-scale secondary movements and low numbers of Dublin transfers. What should be done about those points? First of all, Europe needs a system that is well equipped to cope with different situations, namely at its external borders, within the Member States and on upstream migratory routes before flows even reach Europe. This system needs to be more crisis-resistant and convergent among national asylum systems, in particular with regard to recognition rates. It also needs to address the issues of secondary movements and the disregard of the common rules. The system needs to be more efficient, in particular in processing asylum applications and in ensuring the return of rejected asylum seekers. There needs to be more responsibility taken with regard to controlling the external borders and the flows across them, and there needs to be more solidarity with Member States facing a sudden and massive influx of migrants and asylum seekers. Related approaches should be pragmatic and focus on points where all EU Member States can agree. They should further explore the idea of controlled centres, which should be closed centres to avoid secondary movements, determine manifestly unfounded applications and relocate a part of the asylum seekers eligible for international protection to other Member States on a voluntary basis. Individuals who are not eligible for international protection must be taken back to their country of origin. Outside the EU, the idea of disembarkation arrangements should be further pursued. This is in no way a question of the EU “subcontracting” the task to North African States; it is a matter of better supporting those states. More people already disembark in Libya now than cross the Mediterranean, but Libya needs more help to manage the situation in an orderly way. Resettlement should occur further upstream before flows reach the Mediterranean shores. Ambassador Teixeira da Silva also stressed that resettlement can be a solution for the most vulnerable refugees but it cannot be the response to the refugee problem as a whole. The EU has been a great donor to UNHCR, to other organisations and to host countries of refugees. There has been a lot of help already, but this needs to be continued or even expanded.

Turkey as the biggest refugee hosting country continues to support more than 4 million people of different nationalities who are seeking protection, including more than 3.5 million Syrians, who fled from instability, conflict and violence. Meanwhile, most of them have left the camps and live in cities. Turkey provides shelter, food, non-food items, healthcare, education, language courses, vocational training, and social support. Moreover, Syrians also have the right to work in Turkey. For all these measures the country has spent over 33 billion USD. In view of this, **Ece Özbayoğlu Acarsoy**,



People, very important, who are not eligible for international protection must be brought back to their country of origin and this is the bottleneck of any migration and asylum policy that can be regarded as credible by our citizens.

**Pascal Teixeira da Silva**

Ambassador of France in charge of Migration, Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, France



The EU - Turkey Statement has been successful in crushing migrant smuggling networks, has prevented the loss of lives to a significant number, and has reduced the irregular migratory flows to Europe by more than 95 per cent.

**Ece Özbayoğlu Acarsoy**

Deputy Director General, Deputy Directorate General for Immigration, Asylum and Visa, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkey



We have to keep a delicate but important balance between what we do to protect people and what we do to protect the external border. But it is not a trade-off, we have to do both.

**Maciej Popowski**

Deputy Director General, Directorate General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, European Commission



It is important that we have fair and effective procedures within and between EU Member States to provide swift access to safety for those in need of international protection and to ensure timely returns for those that are found not to be in need of international protection.

**Grainne O'Hara**

Director, Division of International Protection,  
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

**Deputy Director General for Immigration, Asylum and Visa at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey**, called the mass movement of people one of the most significant challenges the world faces today. In this area, there is the need to put in place holistic migration management policies that include the contributions of the private sector, NGOs, the public sector as well as of refugees and host communities. These policies must acknowledge human mobility as a global phenomenon and enhance the protection of refugees and migrants through global response and cooperation. Turkey has actively contributed to the development of the global compact on refugees and attaches utmost importance to its success and implementation. But Turkey also regards the EU – Turkey Statement as a big success in crushing migrant smuggling networks, in preventing a loss of lives and in reducing irregular migratory flows to Europe by more than 95 per cent. Turkey has fulfilled its commitments, the EU has done so as well, but more is needed, such as a voluntary humanitarian admission scheme to create legal pathways or the acceleration of the transfer of EU funds to ensure schooling for all Syrian children. Within the framework of the 18 March Agreement, around 16,000 Syrians have been resettled to EU countries. But for genuine burden- and responsibility-sharing further resettlement places need to be pledged. In conclusion, Ms Özbayoğlu Acarsoy underlined that it will be essential to address the root causes of displacement and forced migration as well. This requires using preventive diplomacy, engaging in peace building, increasing humanitarian and development assistance, and seeking real cooperation and responsibility-sharing between all affected countries to address the challenges that they all face.

**Maciej Popowski, Deputy Director General at the Directorate General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations at the European Commission**, started his remarks with a look at the overall displacement situation and gave an overview of the measures taken by the EU and its Member States to respond to it. In Europe's neighbourhood there are currently around 15 million displaced people, mostly but not exclusively refugees from Syria. As regards available tools, the EU has set up two trust funds, one for Syria and one for Africa. These tools are quite a new way of cooperating with non-EU partners on displacement and migration and enable the EU to be much quicker and much more responsive to what needs to be done on the ground. As regards cooperation with Turkey, first of all one has to pay tribute to the efforts of the Turkish government and to give credit for the excellent cooperation. The Commission wants to ensure continuity, in particular when it comes to education and health, but the cooperation will also move into new areas like job creation and better integration of migrants in local communities and on the labour market. The Syria Trust Fund or the North Africa window of the Africa Trust Fund also put a lot of emphasis on the protection of vulnerable persons, on education, on access to healthcare and on the stabilisation of local communities. In dealing with Jordan and Lebanon, the EU wants to look beyond migration management. That is why it agreed to enter into the two compacts with Jordan and with Lebanon in 2016. North



The discussions are taking place with an undercurrent of deeper questions being asked about what kind of migration does Europe want, how does it want to manage that and how does protection fit into that broader frame? I think sometimes the protection question is obscured by that larger issue.

**Elizabeth Collett**

Special Adviser to the Director General,  
International Organization for Migration

Africa is different because the situation mainly pertains to migrants, not necessarily to refugees. Again, the EU wants to focus on those people who are vulnerable and in need of assistance. Through the Trust Fund it was possible to help IOM return more than 30,000 migrants. 90,000 people were granted access to health services. The job is by no means done but it is ongoing. And one has to be prepared for the future as well. There was an important shift in arrivals from the Central Mediterranean Route to the Western Mediterranean Route in 2018, and the EU has to be able to respond to that. Because of the volatility of the situation and also because of the internal debate within the EU, a delicate but important balance must be maintained between what is done to protect people and what is done to protect the external border. The EU has significantly stepped up its support for capacity building on migration management and control in transit countries. One example is Libya and a more recent one is Morocco. Thus, Mr Popowski stressed the excellent cooperation that has been built up between the Commission and the Member States as well as with non-EU countries and international organisations. This allows those responsible to be vigilant, agile and quite well-equipped to deal with present and future challenges.

The question of ensuring pathways to international protection will continue to be one of the major challenges for protection policy reform. **Grainne O'Hara, Director of the Division of International Protection of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees**, shared her views on how the global compact on refugees could contribute to this aim, how it is linked to reforming the Common European Asylum System and how UNHCR assesses the global need for resettlement pledges. According to Ms O'Hara, the global compact on refugees has one fundamental objective and that is to provide a basis for predictable and equitable burden- and responsibility-sharing. The compact emanates from fundamental principles of humanity and international solidarity and it seeks to operationalise these principles in a way that will allow states, international organisations and other partners working in cooperation to better protect and assist refugees and to support host countries and communities. The compact is broad and all-encompassing in terms of different aspects of a refugee response. It contains a comprehensive refugee response framework, which should ensure better burden- and responsibility-sharing and looks at all the specific areas of response needs, for example reception and admission considerations, education, jobs, livelihood or health. Thus, the compact is not per se a tool of migration management. It is fundamentally a tool which is designed to strengthen refugee protection. How does it link to efforts underway to improve the Common European Asylum System? From UNHCR's point of view it is important to have fair and effective procedures within and between EU Member States to provide swift access to safety for those in need of international protection and to ensure timely returns for those that are found not to be in need of international protection. Achieving this should help to address not only concerns about rates and types of arrivals to the EU but also secondary movements within the EU. UNHCR believes that it is fundamentally important

to foster effective solidarity to support those EU Member States that are under pressure. An effective mechanism to help determine relocation of asylum seekers from EU Member States receiving disproportionate numbers of asylum claims should remain part of the CEAS reform. Safeguarding the objectives of resettlement through the establishment of an EU-wide resettlement and humanitarian admissions framework is fundamentally important as well. UNHCR has been consistent in its plea for increased resettlement numbers and has pitched as a goal about ten per cent of refugee figures globally. That would imply resettlement figures of 2 million globally. Resettlement is of course not the only durable solution available to refugees. However, it is probably the only durable solution that also allows for an expression of international solidarity and burden-sharing.

**Elizabeth Collett, Special Adviser to the Director General of the International Organization for Migration**, concluded the panel by taking stock of recent European and global policy-making in the area of protection and by depicting the political currents and undercurrents that influence both debate and outcomes. Her first point was that EU policy development in the area of protection is stalled but not static. The European Union is experiencing a sort of political hangover from the large-scale inflows of the last three years and the confidence shock that has come from having well-thought-out EU policies that when tested fell considerably short. This resulted in a frenzy of activity, proposals and ideas but at the same time in a kind of political stand-off between the Member States and their different perspectives. At the same time there was and is a huge amount of national reform and capacity building going on, within governments but also within civil society and elsewhere. Outside of Europe one could observe partnerships expanding with other countries around the world, both in formal and informal ways, trying to find opportunities to work together. All these observations lead to a second point, namely the question of the underlying goal of all the efforts made in reforming asylum systems and thinking about migration management and protection in the European Union. The answer to this question, however, is anything but clear. In the EU there are a number of different lenses through which the issue of protection is looked at. There is a constituency who look at this through a protection lens, there is a second constituency whose primary objective is thinking about European coherence and the coherence of European Union policy-making, particularly how to maintain an area of cooperation within Schengen, and there is a third constituency trying to think about the issue in terms of responsibility-sharing within Europe and globally. And all of this is taking place with an undercurrent of a conversation and deeper questions being asked about what kind of migration Europe wants, how it wants to manage this migration and how protection would fit into that broader frame. As a final point Ms Collett stated that one of the lessons learning points from the last five years should be that plans on paper, even when they look appealing and logical and have been agreed through consensus, do not always translate into effective practice when put into practice. Realities tend to be messy and the grand ideas

that have been tabled in recent years both at the European Union level and at the global level raise the questions of follow-through on commitments and the readiness to invest in the resources to implement them.

## CONCLUSIONS

- Particularly in Europe, there seems to be a mismatch between the expectations citizens have of their governments when it comes to managing migration and displacement and the ability of these governments to act accordingly or to communicate their views and actions successfully.
- Thus, and as mentioned before, EU Member States find it difficult to develop a coherent position on the reform of the EU protection system. Consequently, EU policy development in the area of protection can be characterised as “stalled but not static”.
- The reform of the European protection system cannot be decoupled from a broader debate on migration as such. The reform process is taking place with, as one panellist put it, an undercurrent of deeper questions being asked about what kind of migration Europe wants, how it wants to manage this migration and how protection would fit into that broader framework.
- The discussion confirmed a number of areas where common views are lacking and where it will be challenging to find them in the near future: solidarity and responsibility-sharing, controlled centres, disembarkation platforms or the principal question whether a Geneva-based protection system can be upheld in times of mass communication and mass mobility.
- Nonetheless, there is agreement on a number of priorities, namely to better protect the external borders; to reform the Common European Asylum System in a way that provides short and efficient asylum procedures, stops secondary movements but still offers protection to those in need of it; to stop organised crime, people smuggling, and the trafficking in human beings; to have an effective return policy and to open more legal pathways for people to come to Europe.
- Towards the outside of the EU there seemed to be more progress than on the inside. The EU Trust Funds, the EU – Turkey Statement or the intense cooperation with Morocco on border management and control are only a few concrete examples where the EU has improved its tool box significantly and achieved very promising results.





# Skilled Migration

Panel II

The Conference's final panel gathered experts from Switzerland, Germany, the European Commission, the European University Institute, the OECD and PriceWaterhouseCoopers. The panellists discussed the issue of skilled migration in the context of demographic trends, existing policies, the complexities of labour markets as well as current and future requirements for skills development.

In his opening, **Ralph Genetzke, Head of the ICMPD Mission in Brussels**, stressed that many of the statements made by the ministers, deputy ministers and state secretaries participating in the VMC had clearly confirmed that issues of legal and labour migration are high on the political agenda. In Europe and in the aftermath of the refugee crisis the issues of skilled migration or more broadly labour migration were somehow overshadowed by the debate on asylum and the access to protection. A move from crisis management to a functioning migration governance system, however, requires a closer look at the issue of labour migration as well, it has to be part of the system. Of course the discussion on demographic developments and resulting labour market demands is not new. Already before 2015 many European countries had looked into possible shortages of skills on their labour market and possible solutions to deal with them. ICMPD as a migration organisation looks at the topic from a migration angle but that is clearly not sufficient. This topic needs to be discussed from different angles, from the perspectives of labour markets and labour market policies, which in Europe are rather rigid, formal and highly specialised. It needs to be discussed from the angle of political acceptance and public opinion. And when seen from the perspectives of Europe's partner countries, labour migration has to be part of a much broader agenda of foreign policy, of development cooperation and of the essence of what migration partnerships must entail. Against this background Mr Genetzke raised a number of principal questions to frame the subsequent panel discussion: Where do we stand in Europe on the issues of skilled migration and labour migration in 2018? What developments have we seen in recent years? Has the discussion changed? What are the needs and what are the proposals on the table at national, at European and at global level? And finally, what are the future scenarios we should plan and prepare ourselves for?

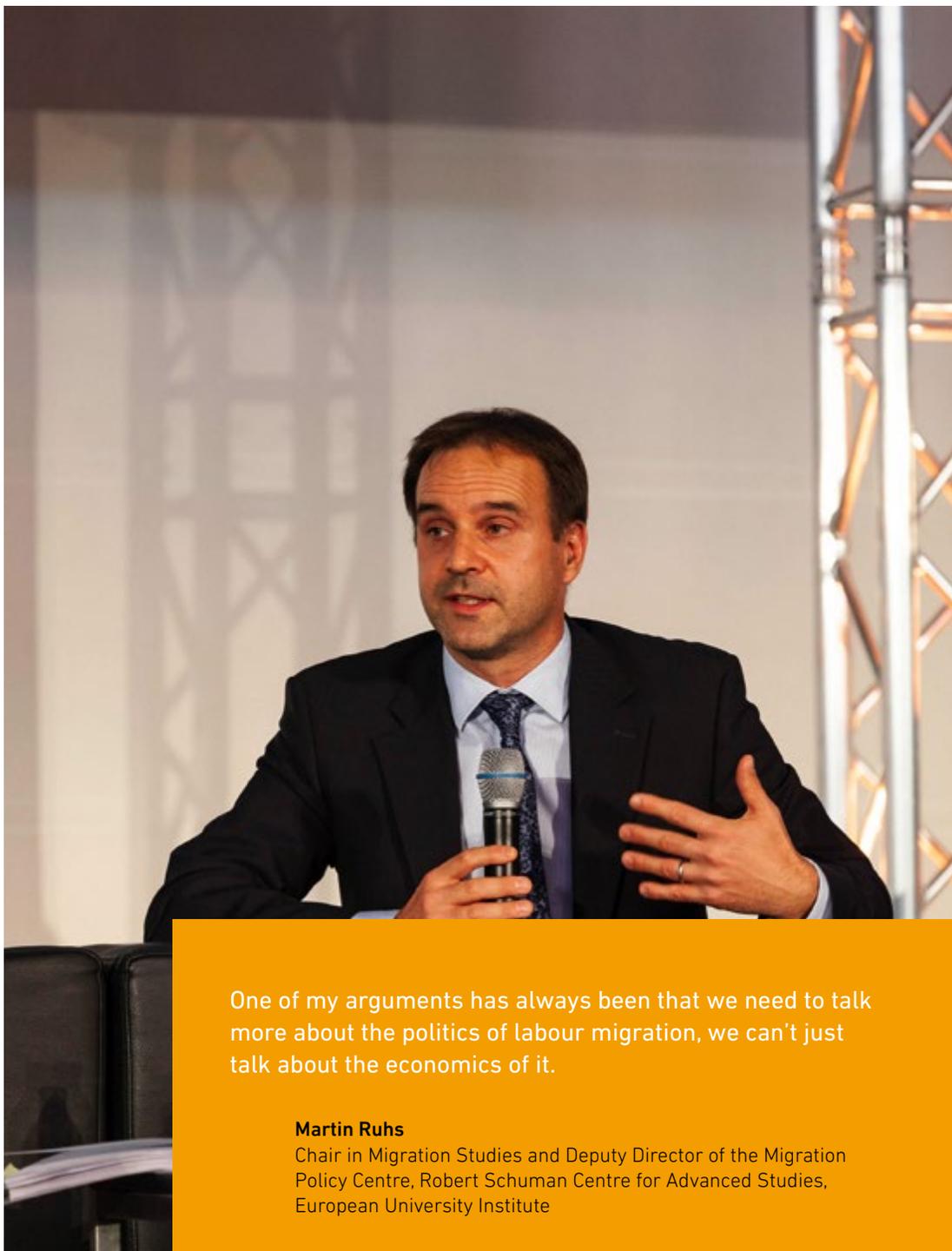
The question of what developments in labour migration policies have taken place in recent years and how they are linked to broader policy issues was taken up by **Martin Ruhs, Chair in Migration Studies and Deputy Director of the Migration Policy Centre, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute**. He sees a disconnect in recent debates about labour migration between macro-level and big picture arguments on the one hand and the reality of labour migration policies on the other. The latter tend to be driven by micro-level factors and what individuals and employers are doing on the ground. There is the often-quoted argument of a need for more labour migration because of demographic reasons and the shrinking labour force. This big picture argument, however, is very different from how labour



If we want to move from crisis to a governance system, for us in ICMPD it is clear that we have to look at the issue of labour migration as well.

**Ralph Genetzke**  
Head of Brussels Mission, ICMPD





One of my arguments has always been that we need to talk more about the politics of labour migration, we can't just talk about the economics of it.

**Martin Ruhs**

Chair in Migration Studies and Deputy Director of the Migration Policy Centre, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute

immigration policy is done at the moment. Most countries in the world have switched from a supply-based to a demand-based immigration policy. A supply-based immigration policy is one which admits people because of their characteristics, because they are highly skilled or for other macro-level reasons, like fostering population growth as Canada used to do. Meanwhile, a lot of countries have moved away from this approach. The great majority of labour immigration programmes around the world are temporary migration programmes that admit migrant workers in very specific sectors and occupations where there is an alleged shortage. In reality, however, it is very difficult to measure skills levels and to establish where a shortage is. In this context shortage has to be seen not as an economic concept but as a political concept. Economists like to think if there is a shortage then wages go up and the shortage goes away. There might be good reasons why wages do not always go up and immigrants might be needed. But when immigration is defined as the right answer to shortages one must always consider whose interests are served by this conclusion. Today, labour immigration policy is an inherently national issue driven by what employers want and how governments respond to employer claims about labour shortages. Simply arguing that there is a demographic challenge and that there are general skills shortages will not shift the debate. There is a need for encouraging precisely these public and political debates on where the shortages are and why more immigration should be more desirable than changes in labour market management or increases in wages. The debate must acknowledge the quite political nature of the issue of labour shortages and how to respond to it. There needs to be in place a very clear and agreed process for deciding whether or not there is a shortage and whether or not immigration is a good answer to the shortage. Employers need to be part of that, trade unions need to be part of that, government departments need to be part of that and the public debate needs to be part of that as well. Then it should be the government's job to critically evaluate employer claims and to bring together employers, workers' representatives, civil society and government departments to come up with an agreed procedure that helps to decide on these questions. A good example for such a process, Mr Ruhs concluded, are the priority occupations lists in many countries, where governments decide that there are shortages based on an inclusive process consulting all relevant stakeholders and taking into account the broader public's views as well.

Following Martin Ruhs' argument that labour immigration is not per se the answer to skills shortages and that the establishment of such shortages should be the result of a well-designed and well-communicated political process, one can ask the question how attractive it is for people with the right characteristics and qualifications to come to Europe when labour shortages have been identified. **Jean-Christophe Dumont, Head of the International Migration Division, Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs at OECD**, argued that the glass in Europe can be seen as half full and half empty in this regard. The OECD has developed talent attractiveness indicators across OECD countries for different migrant categories. A look at the results



I clearly think that the EU is fighting below its weight in the global competition for talent.

**Jean-Christophe Dumont**

Head of the International Migration Division, Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development



You always need evidence and dialogue. Public debate and public opinion are also forms of evidence that we have to factor in and that we have to take into account.

**Cornelia Lüthy**

Vice Director, Head of Immigration and Integration Directorate,  
State Secretariat for Migration, Switzerland

shows that the first EU country is ranked only fifth as regards talent attractiveness; only three EU Member States rank among the top ten. The EU 28 have the same share of low skilled migrants as North America, namely 37 per cent, but when it comes to those with a tertiary education, the share in Europe is only 30 per cent compared to 57 per cent in North America. The total number of people with a tertiary education in the EU has increased during the past five years, but at a four to five times lower rate than in North America. This suggests that the EU is fighting below its weight in the global competition for talent. At the same time Europe has not yet capitalised on the full potential of its Single Labour Market to attract highly skilled workers from third countries. The OECD in close cooperation with the European Commission has made proposals to improve the added value of EU instruments to manage labour migration in general and highly skilled migration in particular. However, at the moment there seems to be but little political momentum to move forward on the matter of labour migration. Thus, one should not only think about the most skilled and the people with a master's degree, there are plenty of shortages or skills needed at medium skill level as well. This skills segment falls under EU Member States responsibility and no country has really found the ideal policy to deal with it. Sweden's system is quite liberal yet attracts only a small number of third country nationals as workers. Poland has opened its labour market to temporary foreign workers and has become the biggest immigration country in the OECD for temporary foreign workers. France has a full policy package but has difficulties applying its instruments. Germany, for its part, is the most attractive EU Member State for migrant labour but does not have a channel yet for bringing in people with medium-level skills. The EU obviously has great potential due to its dynamic labour markets, the diversity of its geopolitical connections, its role as a centre for innovation, and the attractiveness of European values to the rest of the world. The potential is there, but Europe needs to think out of the box to get itself back in the game. There is this innovative idea of skills partnerships. Their added value is that they mix mobility with a skills development component and this is very important. This makes them a good option for the mutual benefit of countries of origin, countries of destination, migrants themselves and the employers as well.

In her presentation **Cornelia Lüthy, Vice Director of the Immigration and Integration Directorate in the Swiss State Secretariat for Migration**, described how her country has moved from a seasonal workers scheme that mostly was demand-driven to the free movement of workers scheme with EU / EFTA countries in 2002. Since then labour immigration from the EU has increased significantly while third country immigration has remained stable. From a skills shortage perspective the free movement of persons agreement is a success story for Switzerland. Switzerland can actually meet most of the demand for medium- and high-skilled people through immigration from Europe while third country immigration that is subject to quotas, labour market tests and a national priority scheme can focus on high-skilled persons. But it is also a fact that Switzerland has shortages of skills in some areas, namely MINT, mathematics,

informatics, natural science, technologies, but also in areas like healthcare. There will be a need for labour immigration in Switzerland. It will increase in the years ahead and there will be an ongoing controversial debate on it. Thus, it is vital, for economic and political reasons, also to foster the domestic workforce potential, training and education for everybody in the country, for underprivileged young people, for elderly people, but also for refugees. Switzerland has tripled its investment on integration and tries to match sectors facing skills shortages with the existing domestic supply. There will always be a demand from employers for labour migration and they sometimes also voice it in sectors where there are high unemployment rates, for example in construction or catering. So, in a way the authorities have to learn to say no to employers' claims, too. And this is why Switzerland has set up a process where federal authorities together with the cantons are in direct contact with the employers, check their needs, and then the federal level decides whether the overall economic interests are served or not. At the same time the State Secretariat for Migration has started a dialogue with the employers and tried to convince them that instead of recruiting a person from Europe or from a neighbouring country in a sector where there are high unemployment rates in Switzerland, they should try to recruit and train a person out of the domestic labour force, including refugees with the legal entitlement and basic qualifications to be recruited in this way.

**Matthias Oel, Director responsible for Migration, Mobility and Innovation at the Directorate General for Migration and Home Affairs of the European Commission,** reiterated the need for a broad and comprehensive discussion on legal migration. Due to the crisis in 2015, the EU and its Member States have naturally focused on other areas of migration. However, one has to take into consideration that the numbers of irregular arrivals and asylum seekers in the European Union has decreased dramatically since 2015 although the public discussion does not always reflect this fact. This suggests that it is about time to overcome crisis management mode and move towards a sustainable migration governance system. The Conclusions of the European Council of June 2018 confirmed this notion when the Heads of State or Government concluded that a comprehensive approach is needed. This approach must ensure, first, an effective control of the EU's external borders; second, a firm return policy and third, a well-managed legal migration and asylum policy. And from the Commission's perspective there is a need for orderly controlled legal migration for very good reasons: first, to limit irregular migration to the extent possible. This must also include ways to ensure orderly migration and legal migration pathways and has two different aspects. The first aspect entails pathways for humanitarian reasons. The UNHCR has asked the European Union to resettle 50,000 refugees by the end of next year. Thus, Mr Oel stressed that resettlement is functioning very well and that the Commission has received more than 50,000 pledges from the Member States. Furthermore, the negotiations on the Resettlement Framework Regulation are ongoing, the aim being to achieve a more structured legal framework for resettlement in the future. The second



We want the cooperation of countries of origin on readmission and return and that's why we also have to offer something to them which is an incentive to accept this and that is also legal migration.

**Matthias Oel**

Director, Directorate B - Migration, Mobility and Innovation,  
Directorate General for Migration and Home Affairs,  
European Commission



We have a lack in Germany of workers with non-academic professional degrees and see that it is very difficult to find the potential for these professions that we need in other countries.

**Alexander Wilhelm**

Managing Director International Relations, International and Specialised Services, Federal Employment Agency, Germany

aspect pertains to pathways for legal migration and labour migration. Here it has to be absolutely clear that the management of labour markets and social systems is at national level and remains at national level. The Commission, for its part, has proposed a reform of the EU Blue Card, which is currently being negotiated. In addition, the Commission supports EU Member States in developing and implementing legal migration pilot projects, which seek to admit legal migrants from third countries on a temporary basis to labour markets of Member States with particular demographic needs. After a certain number of years these migrants are supposed to return to their home countries, supported by European Union funds as start-up financing for business creation. This is intended to incentivise return but also to create infrastructures in the mid-term in countries of origin to lower pressures to engage in irregular migration. This type of circular migration scheme would benefit EU Member States by temporarily closing labour market gaps. The approach is still in its pilot phase. So far twelve EU Member States have expressed interest to cooperate. The first six pilot projects are about to start, and the Commission hopes that Member States will pledge more in the near future.

The recruitment of qualified labour and the related challenges have become burning issues in some EU Member States. In this regard, **Alexander Wilhelm, Managing Director for International Relations, International and Specialised Services from the German Federal Employment Agency**, pointed out that Germany's immigration law is one of the most liberal ones within OECD countries. As such it provides sufficient possibilities to recruit high skilled workers from abroad. At the same time the German government has discovered that the greatest shortage in skills on the German labour market is in skilled but non-academic occupations. Germany has a lack of workers with non-academic professional degrees and has experienced great difficulties finding potential workers for these professions in other countries. From other EU countries such recruitment would be easier but since they are undergoing similar demographic developments, Germany started about two years ago to look a bit further afield and to increase cooperation with third countries outside Europe as well. The government intends to improve the underlying legal framework to make it easier to attract and to recruit skilled workers to meet labour market demand below the academic level. Thus, the German authorities are trying to make sure that the interests of countries of origin are considered alongside the interests of the country of destination. Mr Wilhelm emphasised that the guiding principles of his agency, as a public employment service, are to ensure fair recruitment, to work with trusted employers in Germany, and to work closely with public employment service partners in the countries of origin or, in cases where there are no public employment services, with the ministries of labour or in other countries as well. As a concrete example Germany started a programme in 2013 called "triple-win" which recruits nurses in four countries, namely Bosnia Herzegovina, Serbia, the Philippines and Tunisia. The programme is based on bilateral agreements with these countries that lay down all recruitment and employment



In real terms the global war for talent is ongoing. To make it very clear, in my firm, it is not I who decides who should stay, it is the employees who decide whether to work for me or not.

**Alfred Höhn**

Leader Government & Public Sector, Europe and EMEA,  
PricewaterhouseCoopers

conditions, provide for regular meetings with the national partners in these countries and try to make sure that recruitment is always in the interest of the national partners, the workers themselves and of course the German employers as well.

In his statement and in his capacity as representative of the private sector, **Alfred Höhn, Leader Government & Public Sector for Europe and EMEA at PricewaterhouseCoopers**, questioned whether the political and legal debate has fully realised how serious and severe the global “war for talent” has become in the meantime. The trends discussed long before 2015 have not stopped because of the refugee crisis. In reality, the war for talent is more intense than ever. Even for a big player like PricewaterhouseCoopers it is not the employer anymore who decides about recruitment; it is the employees who decide whether they take up a job offer or not. If it is more attractive to work in another world region, employees will leave company and country. It is as simple as that. As far as labour migration is concerned there are a number of points to consider. Three years ago, PricewaterhouseCoopers conducted a study which showed that Germany might have a shortfall of labour force of up to 4 million people within the next twenty years. Now, the question is how to fix this deficit. According to Mr Höhn there is quite a basic answer. European economies and societies will we have to do not only automation and not only labour migration, but a combination of both. They will have to increase productivity via technology but also sustain their markets by immigration. In the next thirty years Germany will lose ten to fifteen million people. Now the question is how to fill this gap. One should be careful with overregulation and should keep in mind that it is people themselves who will ultimately decide where to go. This basic fact calls for creating ecosystems where people feel comfortable, where they find a good cultural environment attractive to people from all over the world. The changes facing Europe will be much bigger than currently expected. Qualification and upskilling of the resident population will have to accompany this process. For Germany alone Mr Höhn expects an upskilling need in the next years for about 4 – 6 million people to meet the requirements of automation. A policy mix will be needed that combines all activities of all different stakeholders, aligns public programmes better with market realities, addresses overprotection and overregulation, and ultimately starts to admit that in big parts of Europe, there is a strong and growing need for additions to the workforce.



## CONCLUSIONS

- Global competition for talent is a reality and this trend is expected to continue due to demographic developments and the transformation of labour markets.
- Europe has great potential for attracting global talent due to its dynamic labour markets, the diversity of its geopolitical connections, its role as a centre for innovation, and the attractiveness of European values to the rest of the world. The potential is there but Europe needs to think out of the box to increase its attractiveness in comparison to other world regions.
- Thus far, there seems to be a disconnect between macro-level and big picture arguments on the one hand and the reality of labour migration policies on the other. The latter tend to be driven by micro-level factors and what individuals and employers are doing on the ground.
- In reality, however, it is very difficult to measure skills levels and to establish where a shortage is. In this context, shortage must be seen not purely as an economic concept but also as a political concept.
- Despite a growing need for labour immigration, the controversial debate on this issue will continue. Thus, it is vital, for economic and political reasons, also to utilise the domestic workforce potential, to promote training and education for everybody in a country, especially for those who face challenges in entering employment and in performing on labour markets.
- It will not be sufficient to focus solely on highly skilled workers. The greatest shortages are found in skilled non-academic occupations. It is very difficult to find potential workers in other countries in this segment in particular.
- There is a need for innovative approaches like "skills partnerships". Their added value is that they mix mobility with a skills development component. This implies mutual benefit for countries of origin, countries of destination, migrants themselves and the employers as well.
- Ultimately, Europe needs to apply a policy mix that combines all actions of all different stakeholders, aligns public programmes better with market realities, addresses overprotection and overregulation but also starts to admit that in big parts of Europe there is a strong and growing need for additional workforce.



# Conclusion

## Vienna Migration Conference 2018

The discussions at the 2018 VMC confirmed that the perceptions on how to overcome the refugee and migration crisis and to regain the trust of citizens and voters differ within Europe. EU Member States continue to find it difficult to develop a coherent position on the reform of the EU protection system. The impasse on the Dublin reform, the different views on the migration compact process, and the divergent visions on the reform of the global protection systems are indicators of that.

But this should not detract from the tremendous progress that has been made in European and global migration governance since 2015. The EU and its Member States have started a fundamental reform of existing policies and systems and the creation of new instruments. The many initiatives of the last three years, like the Valletta Action Plan, the Trust Fund for Africa, the New Partnership Framework, the EU - Turkey Statement or the External Investment Plan are all expressions of this progress. The progress is also reflected in the decreasing number of arrivals in Europe in 2017 and 2018. The global compacts on migrants and refugees, hotly debated in Europe and other parts of the world, have the potential to make the governance of migration and displacement a truly global responsibility.

However, the progress achieved at European and international levels has not yet been felt by the European citizens and voters. There is an ongoing mismatch between the expectations EU citizens have of towards their governments when it comes to managing migration and displacement and the ability of these governments to act accordingly or to communicate their views and actions successfully. In order to overcome this mismatch, there must be a focus on three priorities:

First of all, Europe and the international community have to become better at addressing the main root causes of flight and migration: conflict, demography, economic transition and economic disparities. The various European and global initiatives are moving in the right direction when it comes to these efforts. But many more initiatives will be needed, and they will not work unless they are developed and implemented in full partnership between all States and partners involved and unless they operate in full acknowledgement of those parties' respective needs and interests.

Second, Europe has to move towards a rules-based migration system with clearly defined objectives. The 2018 VMC confirmed that skills shortages on European labour



markets are real and will increase in the future. It is not about keeping people out, it is about deciding who is allowed to enter and under what conditions. And it is about being able to enforce those rules. Of course this is not a new concept. But Europe and its partners have to become better at managing legal and labour migration on the one hand and at imposing strict and effective migration control on the other.

Last but not least all decision-makers have to be aware of one issue. Anti-immigrant sentiment is mostly found among those who are in fear of losing their jobs, their livelihoods and their social positions. More acceptance of immigration can only be achieved through policies that try to make sure that nobody is or feels left behind, policies that create jobs, opportunities and prospects for all parts of society. And that is the third part of the political challenge Europe and the international community have to meet. Collectively, they need to push an agenda of innovation, economic growth and cooperation, social inclusion and access to opportunities for all their citizens. If they manage to deliver on this agenda, citizens and voters will start to trust in their migration policies as well.

## AGENDA VIENNA MIGRATION CONFERENCE 2018 | AULA OF SCIENCES

**Thursday, 18 October 2018**

### Welcoming and Opening

- ➔ **H.E. Michael Spindelegger** | Director General  
International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)
- ➔ **H.E. Gernot Blümel** | Federal Minister  
Federal Chancellery for the EU, Arts, Culture and Media, Austria
- ➔ **H.E. Federica Mogherini** | High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission (video statement)

### High-Level Political Panel on International Migration

- ➔ **H.E. Mark Harbers** | Minister for Migration  
Ministry of Justice and Security, The Netherlands
- ➔ **H.E. Eduardo Cabrita** | Minister of Home Affairs, Portugal
- ➔ **H.E. Stephan Mayer** | Parliamentary State Secretary  
Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community, Germany
- ➔ **H.E. Faizullah Zaki Ibrahim** | Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Afghanistan
- ➔ **H.E. Yavuz Selim Kiran** | Deputy Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkey
- ➔ **H.E. Adel Jarbouï** | Secretary of State in charge of Migration and Tunisians living abroad, Ministry of Social Affairs, Tunisia
- ➔ **H.E. Emilia Saiz** | Secretary General, United Cities and Local Governments

Moderator: H.E. Michael Spindelegger, Director General, ICMPD

### Reception upon invitation of the Mayor and Governor of Vienna, Dr Michael Ludwig

- ➔ Welcome remarks by Mag.a Sybille Straubinger, Member of the City Council of Vienna, on behalf of the Mayor and Governor of Vienna, Dr Michael Ludwig

**Friday, 19 October 2018**

### Opening

- ➔ **H.E. Michael Spindelegger** | Director General, ICMPD
- ➔ **Mr Lukas Gehrke** | Director, Policy, Research and Strategy, ICMPD

### Global Compact on Migration

- ➔ **Mr Jonathan Prentice** | Chief of Office, Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for International Migration, United Nations

### Panel I – Reforming Refugee Protection

- ➔ **Ms Nina Gregori** | Director General, Internal Administrative Affairs, Migration and Naturalisation Directorate, Ministry of Interior, Slovenia
- ➔ **Thomas Mühlhans** | Head of Department National, European and International Migration Strategies, Federal Ministry of the Interior, Austria

- ➔ **H.E. Pascal Teixeira da Silva** | Ambassador of France in charge of Migration, Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, France
- ➔ **Ms Ece Özbayoğlu Acarsoy** | Deputy Director General, Deputy Directorate General for Immigration, Asylum and Visa, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkey
- ➔ **Mr Maciej Popowski** | Deputy Director General, Directorate General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, European Commission
- ➔ **Ms Grainne O'Hara** | Director, Division of International Protection United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
- ➔ **Ms Elizabeth Collett** | Special Adviser to the Director General International Organization for Migration

Moderator: Ms Malin Frankenhaeuser, Head of Policy, Directorate of Policy, Research and Strategy, ICMPD

#### Panel II – Skilled Migration

- ➔ **Ms Cornelia Lüthy** | Vice Director, Head of Immigration and Integration Directorate, State Secretariat for Migration, Switzerland
- ➔ **Mr Alexander Wilhelm** | Managing Director International Relations International and Specialised Services, Federal Employment Agency, Germany
- ➔ **Mr Matthias Oel** | Director, Directorate B-Migration, Mobility and Innovation, Directorate General for Migration and Home Affairs, European Commission
- ➔ **Mr Martin Ruhs** | Chair in Migration Studies and Deputy Director of the Migration Policy Centre, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute
- ➔ **Mr Jean-Christophe Dumont** | Head of the International Migration Division, Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
- ➔ **Mr Alfred Höhn** | Leader Government & Public Sector Europe and EMEA, PricewaterhouseCoopers

Moderator: Mr Ralph Genetzke, Head of Brussels Mission, ICMPD

#### Final Observations on the Panel Discussions

- ➔ **Ms Cornelia Lüthy** | Vice Director, Head of Immigration and Integration Directorate, State Secretariat for Migration, Switzerland
- ➔ **Ms Elizabeth Collett** | Special Adviser to the Director General International Organization for Migration

Moderator: Ms Malin Frankenhaeuser, Head of Policy, Directorate of Policy, Research and Strategy, ICMPD

#### Closure of the VMC 2018

- ➔ **H.E. Michael Spindelegger** | Director General, ICMPD

**International Centre for Migration  
Policy Development (ICMPD)**

Gonzagagasse 1  
A - 1010 Vienna  
Austria

[www.icmpd.org](http://www.icmpd.org)

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, copied or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, or any information storage and retrieval system without permission of the copyright owners.

Text editing: Martin Hofmann, ICMPD  
Photo editing: Elisabeth Minkow, ICMPD  
Publication: Bernhard Schragl, ICMPD  
Art Direction & Design: Sarah Blum

International Centre for Migration  
Policy Development (ICMPD) Austria, 2019



This publication has been made possible by the support of



**Raiffeisen Bank  
International**