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ICMPD encourages leaders to press the reset button on European migration policy

Vienna, 20th September 2019: The International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) gears up to publish its recommendations for the next five years addressed to EU decision-makers. Now is the time for leaders to press the reset button to break political gridlocks on EU migration policy, and come together through pragmatic implementation and innovative cooperation.

The recommendations come at a particularly opportune moment given the formation of the next European Commission. With migration featuring in several portfolios [1], ICMPD is pleased to see the coordination of migration elevated to the level of Vice-President-Designate, Margaritis Schinas. This is in line with one of our main recommendations to ensure a more integrated and coherent approach to migration across all its dimensions.

"2019 is the year Europe must overcome its reactive approach to migration and get real on a future-oriented policy," said Michael Spindelegger, Director General of ICMPD. "A new approach is needed to reverse the current paralysis in Europe and drive forward new policies, building on progress already made."

The new European Parliament, Commission and Council have challenging times ahead to find agreement on migration. In support of laying the necessary groundwork for future prompt decisions and actions, ICMPD will propose 70 constructive, forward-looking and pragmatic recommendations in November when the mandate for the new Commission starts. Developed in close collaboration with ICMPD's 17 Member States – including Switzerland and Sweden, Poland and Turkey – these recommendations are aimed at helping the new leadership move EU migration policy forward.

The priority issues identified by ICMPD include renewing a common vision for international protection, safeguarding Schengen, improving return partnerships, taking a stronger regional migration system and routes approach, and dealing with the lack of skilled labour.

Other recommendations put forward by ICMPD include:

Promote voluntary cooperation between Member States on jointly processing arrivals and asylum claims, and ensuring return and integration of recognised refugees, with reference to the concept of controlled centres;

Pilot additional bilateral and trilateral cooperation centres at the external borders;

Embed cooperation on return into a broader set of mutually benefitting relations;

Pilot and promote skills partnerships;

More actively involve the private sector in determining labour shortages as well as designing and implementing practical measures;

Prioritise integration measures that start as early as possible;

Integrate the Western Balkan countries into the EU's regional migration system; and

Support regional economic cooperation, free movement and integration in Africa.

Michael Spindelegger concluded: "We know from recent EU surveys that citizens expect us to do more on migration. Governments and the EU should communicate openly about the reasons for the political decisions taken, their complexities and how the decisions taken will, in both the short and the long run, meet the needs of societies."

ICMPD wants its recommendations to stimulate a process at various levels to resolve gridlocks and work together to see a more crisis-resilient and strong Europe emerge five years from now. The recommendations will be presented and discussed at the Vienna Migration Conference in November 2019.

[1] Including protecting our European Way of Life, Home Affairs, A stronger Europe in the World, International Partnerships, Neighbourhood and Enlargement, and Crisis Management.

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The International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) is an international organisation with 18 Member States and more than 350 staff members. Active in more than 90 countries worldwide, it takes a regional approach in its work to create efficient cooperation and partnerships along migration routes. Priority regions include Africa, Central and South Asia, Europe, and the MiddleEast. Its three-pillar approach to migration management – structurally linking research, migration 3 dialogues and capacity building – contributes to better migration policy development worldwide. The Vienna-based organisation has a mission in Brussels, a regional office in Malta and project offices in several countries. ICMPD

receives funding from its Member States, the European Commission, the UN, and other multilateral institutions, as well as bilateral donors. Founded in 1993, ICMPD holds UN observer status and cooperates with more than 700 partners including EU institutions and UN agencies.

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