

Salzburg Forum Ministerial Conference

Sofia, 19 November 2015

Excellencies, Distinguished Colleagues and Friends,

Allow me, first of all, to express my condolences to our Hungarian colleagues. The passing away of Ms Berta not only means that we lost a close friend, it also means that the migration community has lost one of its great experts, who will leave a gap which will be difficult to fill. Our thoughts are with her family, friends and colleagues.

Allow me to express my gratitude to Deputy Prime Minister Bachvarova for hosting this Salzburg Forum Ministerial Conference and inviting me to attend it as the DG elect of International Centre for Migration Policy Development. I am honoured to address you today on behalf of an organisation whose membership includes almost all of the fifteen Salzburg Forum states and friends of the Salzburg Forum.

We are experiencing the highest numbers of displacement since the 2nd World War. More people than ever before are forced to flee because of war, conflict and violence. Countries of transit and destination experience refugee and irregular migration flows of huge dimensions and face enormous challenges in dealing with such large numbers of people and in regaining control of their migration systems.

Migration affects all aspects of society and all domains of life. Its challenges cannot be met and its opportunities cannot be utilised at the national level and by individual policies alone. We need a truly comprehensive and a truly international approach; in our context this also means a truly European approach.

This approach has to focus on a number of priorities:

- States have to regain control over the present migration flows to and through their countries, including international information exchange, registration, reception, and status determination. This will only work via close cooperation among police and border authorities in the area of border management and the fight against smuggling and trafficking in human beings;
- States have to offer protection to those in need of it, but must also ensure the return and functioning reintegration of those who are not in need of protection;
- At the same time, we need to offer more opportunities for legal migration – and a lot of homework needs to be done in this field. We have to better define what kind of labour

migration we need and how much of it; and we have to develop much better mechanisms and systems to steer it;

- Closely linked to protection and labour migration is the issue of integration: the success of our migration policies depends on more successful participation of migrants in our societies, both with regard to rights and obligations. Failed integration feeds exclusion and in the worst case leads to violent extremism, and in view of recent events we have to be very aware of that.

As a migration organisation ICMPD works closely with all countries along the migratory routes, analysing migration policies and migration flows. We recently finalised a study on patterns and dynamics in human smuggling, also covering the WB route, containing a number of proposals for better cooperation in this field. We support the major migration dialogues in this region, the Prague and the Budapest Processes. Both Processes bring us closer to some of the main countries of origin of migration in Europe. They allow for a informal, yet constructive dialogue on all the issues mentioned, which will open the door for more concrete cooperation. And, of course, we work hand in hand with European experts on strengthening the migration systems of our partner states, including on issues such as labour migration, integration, trafficking in human beings, border management asylum and return.

Dear colleagues, I will take up my position in January. One of my objectives will be to make ICMPD a more political organisation. I want us to be a true strategic partner for its Member States, especially – but not only – in these difficult and challenging times.