

6th Budapest Process Ministerial Conference

„The Istanbul Commitments“

Check speech against delivery

20 February 2019, Istanbul, Turkey

Closing speech of Dr. Michael Spindelegger

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Distinguished colleagues,

We have come to the point when we can conclude the intense work of the last couple of days in Istanbul, and of the previous two years, resulting in a renewed set of objectives of the Budapest Process countries for jointly transforming contemporary migration challenges with both concerted action and shared responsibility.

With a view to the great number of countries who have signed up to the 2019 Istanbul Commitments and the Call for Action in letter and spirit is indeed remarkable and a reason for satisfaction. At the same time, however, we are reminded that there lies more work ahead of us. The Budapest Process has been – over the last 26 years – instrumental in bringing countries together, in bridging both different positions as well as great distances. The Process will continue to devote its good offices in bridging different viewpoints and positions with the perspective of advancing a shared agenda of creating an effective migration management architecture. The Budapest Process will continue to do so also in view of those countries that today where not in a position to sign up to the Istanbul Commitments and the Call for Action. The Budapest Process is and remains an informal platform with an inclusive operating procedure.

We at ICMPD are aware of the responsibility that is associated with the proceedings of one of the most longstanding migration partnership frameworks and dialogues, that is the Budapest Process. We are reminded, more than ever, that the Process continues to be of utmost relevance: in times of growing differences in stand points and priorities, it is essential to rely on well-established informal platforms such as the Budapest Process to keep the partnership between the countries connected by migration intact, to reinforce underlying trust in order to facilitate continued cooperation in migration.

ICMPD hosting the Budapest Process Secretariat has worked closely with the Chair and Co-Chair leading to this moment. The 2019 Istanbul Commitments and a Call for Action are now adopted by close to 40 participating states, and they represent our joint and shared legacy for the future. In this future, we all wish to see:

Solid partnerships to effectively manage and regulate migration in all its facets; we wish to see better managed migration flows; decreased challenges of irregular migration; the formulas and businesses of smugglers and traffickers drained; we wish to see better protection for those in need of it. We want to see societies free of xenophobia, racism and discrimination against migrants and refugees.

I am pleased to note that in the orchestra of views and positions, the Budapest Process partner countries have all reconfirmed to be good partners to each other, to share expertise, as well as responsibility in ensuring effective migration governance, which is in respect of international human rights and fundamental freedoms.

This is by no means to be taken for granted. It took the Budapest Process two years to find the widest possible consensus on these principles of cooperation, and a lot of strong will of many of you here who have remained actively engaged. Thank you all for this!

Finally, I would like to thank the European Commissioner and the European Union for recognizing the importance of the Budapest Process and demonstrating their commitment including through their financial support for translation of the dialogue into concrete action. I would also like to thank Norway and Switzerland for their additional financial support to facilitate this conference and, once again, my team for all their hard work.

In closing, my special gratitude goes to our host and vigorous Chair of the Budapest Process and the host of this conference, Turkey, for providing the guidance and steering needed to bring all Budapest Process countries to the table. Yesterday's gala dinner under the auspices of the President of the Republic of Turkey will remain a highlight and milestone to be remembered as we embark upon the implementation of the ambitious action plan which remains open to all the countries.

I wish all of us success in the work that is to come and hope to see you all again in the future, to review our progress and achievements in the implementation of the 2019 Istanbul Commitments and the Call for Action!

Thank you very much.