Dear Ministers,

I am honoured to be here, and grateful to Austria for having invited me as Director General of ICMPD to present the main findings of the “Analysis of the impact of the political situation in Ukraine on the migration situation in the Salzburg Forum Member States”, drafted by ICMPD on the request of Austria. Almost all of the Salzburg Forum states including the ‘friends of the Salzburg Forum’ are Member States of ICMPD, and clearly, like them we are following with great attention and concern the developments in Ukraine. The paper you received builds upon a previous paper - Political crisis in the Ukraine – drafted by ICMPD for its MS on February 27, 2014 as well as on the data collected by the Salzburg Forum Member States during the period June 2014 - April 2015. This data was gathered following your decision during the Ministerial Conference of the Salzburg Forum in Modra on 19 June 2014. The analysis also takes into account information from other relevant sources (Frontex, EASO, IOM, UNHCR and the Russian Federal Migration Service). We also added our own considerations and conclusions relevant for the Salzburg Forum.

Without further delay, let me summarise the main findings:

According to the most recent data, most Ukrainians entered the Salzburg Forum member states through traditional labour migration routes. The number of illegal border crossings slightly grew compared to the previous year, yet remained moderate throughout the period. At the same time, in the period April 2014 – April 2015, Russia faced an influx of close to 1 million Ukrainian citizens who remained on the Russian territory. The highest number of visa applications was filed in Poland, some 550,000. Poland also reported the highest number of refusals (an increase of 23%) of entry of Ukrainian nationals in 2014.

The majority of asylum requests is filed inland within the territory of the Salzburg Forum member states, with Poland receiving 1,768 applications for asylum during the reporting period, followed by Austria and the Czech Republic both with some 550 applications. The rest of the SF member states saw comparatively low numbers of applications (38 in Hungary; 27 in Romania; 73 in Bulgaria; and 20 in Slovakia, for the entire period June 2014-April 2015). The reasons behind these remarkable differences need to be analysed, but some counterparts have suggested that the higher number in Poland stems from Ukrainians already present in Poland who used the asylum procedure to prolong their stay.

Regarding the means used for illegal entry by the Ukrainian nationals, the use of fraudulent documents was the most frequently detected, particularly at the Polish land border crossing points.
Dear Ministers, it is difficult to predict the developments in the coming months. But what we do know is that there are currently almost 1.3 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) on the territory of Ukraine. Given the economic and security situation of the country, it can be concluded that Ukraine alone will not be in the position to ensure sustainable good conditions to its IDPs. The potential of continuation of the conflict, combined with the severe winter conditions in some geographical parts of Ukraine as well as the low standard of living conditions provided to IDPs, the winter season might see intensified migration flow towards the countries neighbouring the Ukraine, including the EU. The international community needs to provide even stronger support for the Ukraine, helping the country to host and integrate longer displaced persons should be considered. This should go beyond pure emergency aid for IDPs, and should include the development of institutions at the national and regional level, which are able to deal with the situation. Even though we speak about IDPs, useful lessons could be drawn from regional protection and development projects implemented in other regions.