ICMPD announces the new Newsletter

ICMPD is very pleased to announce the first issue of the new ICMPD Newsletter. The Newsletter will be issued quarterly and will provide updates on the latest ICMPD news and events, as well as interesting feature articles focusing on migration-related topics. It is available on the ICMPD website as a PDF, as well as in a printed version. More information about the ICMPD Newsletter and other ICMPD publications can be obtained by contacting the Communications Unit of ICMPD at the email address: media@icmpd.org.

ICMPD & Tunisian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Conference “The Role of Migration in the Development of Post-Revolution Tunisia”

From 13 - 14 July 2011, ICMPD and the Tunisian Ministry of Foreign Affairs held the conference “The Role of Migration in the Development of Post-Revolution Tunisia”. The meeting brought together representatives from a broad range of Tunisian ministries and agencies with delegates from European states and international organisations. Its aim was to provide a forum for an open exchange on the current challenges and opportunities facing Tunisia in the area of migration. It was organised with the support of the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation and the Czech Ministry of Interior. ICMPD has produced a five-point plan for addressing migration trends in the Mediterranean-Arab region, which emphasizes revisiting the Mediterranean Neighbourhood Policy of the European Union (EU).

Bosnia and Herzegovina & Serbia become Member States of ICMPD

On 15 April 2011 in Zagreb, Bosnia and Herzegovina became the 13th Member State of ICMPD and on 6 July 2011 in Belgrade, Serbia became the 14th Member State of ICMPD. The signing ceremony of Bosnia and Herzegovina was part of a high-level meeting of ICMPD Member States and Western Balkan countries. During the meeting, Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia were invited to join ICMPD. Membership talks with these countries are currently underway and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is already set to join by the end of 2011. In addition, Turkey will join ICMPD in the coming months.

Upcoming events

17 Nov Senior Officials Meeting and Meeting of the Friends of the Chair of the Budapest Process in Ankara, Turkey

21-23 Nov EaP IBM FIT Regional Workshop “Conducting Activities to Detect Smuggling” in Minsk, Belarus

23-25 Nov GOVAC Knowledge Transfer Workshops in Chisinau, Moldova

5-6 Dec Steering Group Meeting in Vienna, Austria
First of all let me express my pleasure to welcome you to the new ICMPD Newsletter. After a several months’ hiatus, ICMPD is re-introducing this quarterly information tool with the aim of sharing with our readers updates on the organisation and our work, as well as the standpoints on migration. This is also the first Newsletter since I took over the function of the Director General in January 2010. There are a number of issues we have dealt with since then, both on the international scene and within the organisation, the latter of which I would like to focus on now.

About ICMPD
To start with, I will take a step back and briefly introduce ICMPD to those of you who are not yet familiar with our organisation. ICMPD was created to serve as a support mechanism for informal consultations and to provide expertise and services in the emerging landscape of multilateral cooperation on migration issues. Founded by Austria and Switzerland in 1993, other European countries have since joined, which brings the total today to 14 members. ICMPD, which has the status of an international organisation, is based in Vienna with offices in various countries in Europe, North Africa and the Middle East.

At the beginning, research was at the core of ICMPD’s activities; however, ICMPD’s activities have broadened over the years to include implementing capacity-building projects and providing support to migration dialogues. The organisation gradually gained recognition as an important partner and think-tank institution in the migration field, both in Europe and beyond. Continuous growth of the organisation, led primarily by an increase in our activities, as well as in thematic and geographic coverage, has necessitated several important changes in the organisation. Furthermore, in order to maintain its forward-looking and impartial spirit, ICMPD has had to adjust to the changing migration landscape that it is now undoubtedly an integral part of.

The ICMPD Strategy 2015
A considerable amount of time was devoted to design a strategy that would, in its content, match the character of the organisation that overcame its ‘growing pains' and reflect the changing migration realities at the strategic and operational level. I would like to use this occasion to thank my colleagues for their devotion and valuable input throughout the process that led to the adoption of the ICMPD Strategy 2015 and for their support throughout its implementation.
At this point, I would like to point out the following elements referred to in the strategy. ICMPD promotes comprehensive and future-oriented migration governance based on solid evidence and in close partnership with all relevant stakeholders. This approach is reflected in the three pillars of our work: capacity building, research and migration dialogues. Combining the expertise from these different, but intrinsically-linked, approaches allows us to offer advice and services of the highest quality to our partners.

The second important element in the strategy is that ICMPD is a European migration organisation that deals with the global phenomenon of migration. This implies that we closely follow and live by the European understanding of migration. The mid- and long-term interests of Europe and its partners are central to our work, without losing sight of the short-term priorities created by crises and public debate.

We shall not omit another important attribute – ICMPD as a member state-based organisation. We will continue to align our activities to those of our Member States – to their long-term, strategic and operational objectives, including their geographic priorities. Our operational activities concentrate on six main thematic areas, namely, illegal migration and return, trafficking in human beings, border management and visa, asylum, migration and development and legal migration and integration. While we have extensive experience in many of these competence areas, we need to strengthen our capacities in those that are more recent additions to ICMPD.

I believe that knowing what ICMPD stands for, what the guiding principles of our work are and how we want to encompass our strategic objectives strengthens trust among our partners. Promoting open dialogue and information sharing and providing support where needed, while adhering to a high level of expertise and professionalism, have always been and will continue to be key attributes of ICMPD.

About the ICMPD Newsletter
I hope that this issue and future issues of the new ICMPD Newsletter will provide you with interesting and useful information about the broad field of migration. We strive to bring you the latest news not only from our daily work but, most importantly, our insights on developments in the field of migration. It is one of the aims of ICMPD to increase the understanding of the phenomenon so much discussed among politicians and lived by many of us in our daily lives. Enjoy this issue!

Mr. Peter Widermann was appointed the ICMPD Director General for the 2010 - 2015 term unanimously by ICMPD Steering Group at its 48th meeting held in Lisbon in September 2009. He is an Austrian national who served more than 20 years in the Federal Ministry of the Interior where he held various positions relating to migration management, e.g., visa and border management. He retired from the position of Deputy Director General for Public Security at the Ministry. Mr. Widermann has the academic degree Doctor of Law.

Peter Widermann
Director General
Since its early days, it has been ICMPD’s role to facilitate informal intergovernmental dialogues on issues in migration. In this regard, ICMPD’s activities have always emphasised the leading role of states in the migration debate and acknowledged that states must have the final responsibility to decide on their migration policies.

Since October 2008, when the first talks about the establishment of a new mechanism for dialogue between the EU and its partners in wider Europe and Central Asia arose, ICMPD has provided its services and support to the five founders of the Prague Process – the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia – as well as to all 50 Prague Process participating states. The joint efforts of this group of leading states and all partners for the “Building Migration Partnerships” Joint Declaration, adopted in Prague in April 2009, have brought international recognition to this dynamic process. It has become a complementary tool to existing cooperation platforms, such as the Global Approach to Migration, the Mobility Partnerships, the Eastern Partnership and the EU-Russia Dialogue.

The three years of the “Building Migration Partnerships” initiative have been active and a number of concrete results have been achieved. To highlight only one of them: the elaboration of a large number of state-owned and state-endorsed Migration Profiles through the active participation of the partners from Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, Russia and Central Asian states. These profiles analyse the migration situation in the respective country and, even more importantly, highlight concrete priorities for cooperation at the international level.

The Ministerial Conference in Poznan on 3 and 4 November 2011 concludes these three eventful and successful years of the “Building Migration Partnerships” initiative. And at the same time, it paves the way for even stronger cooperation among all countries involved. The “Prague Process Action Plan” adopted by the ministers provides the platform to address these priorities very concretely, on an equal level and on a voluntary basis, which is an approach welcomed and appreciated by all participants. More information about the Prague Process - Building Migration Partnerships (PP-BMP) initiative can be found at: www.icmpd.org/Prague-Process-BMP.1557.0.html
Facilitating person-to-person contact, while promoting fundamental rights and strengthening the rule of law, has been one of the guiding principles of the Eastern Partnership - IBM Flagship Initiative Training Project (EaP IBM FIT). This initiative was established at the Prague Summit in 2009 by the EU and Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.

The core objective of the EaP IBM FIT is to enhance the mobility of citizens in a secure and well-managed environment. ICMPD began to implement this project in January 2011 in order to enhance operational capacities by providing operational and country-specific capacity building activities and contributing to the establishment of modern training systems in the partner countries.

The project covers the following issues:

- Support to the implementation of the IBM strategy and action plan
- Document integrity and security, detection of forgeries and imposter recognition
- Risk analysis for border guards and customs
- Detection of drugs and smuggled tobacco products
- Protection of intellectual property rights
- Fight against corruption (horizontal thematic area)

In October 2011, the project conducted a successful regional workshop in cooperation with another EU funded project, the South Caucasus Integrated Border Management Programme, implemented in partnership between ICMPD and UNDP. The event took place in Tbilisi, Georgia and convened a high number of representatives of all six Eastern Partnership countries. Together with experts from Latvia, Hungary, France, UNDP and ICMPD, they discussed the state-of-play of the IBM strategies and action plans in each country, the introduction of monitoring mechanisms for the strategies and action plans, obstacles to efficient bilateral cooperation in trade facilitation and challenges in the fight against corruption.

More details on the project, including the calendar of events, can be found on the project website: www.eap-fit.eu/en/
Q & A with Lukas Gehrke

Mr. Lukas Gehrke, the Director of the Southern Dimension at ICMPD, gives his perspective on the changes sweeping North Africa and the Middle East.

Q: Has the Arab Spring impacted ICMPD and its work? If so, how?

A: It certainly has impacted us and the work we carry out. But ICMPD already has a lot of experience in assisting regions undergoing dramatic political and economic transformations by facilitating cooperation and dialogue. After we were established in 1993, we immediately faced the challenge of dealing with the changes taking place in Eastern Europe and South Eastern Europe after the fall of the Wall and the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia. We were able to help bring these countries and the countries of Western Europe closer together to develop plans for dealing with emerging migration issues.

The experience we gained working with the countries of Eastern and South Eastern Europe and our longstanding relations with the Mediterranean region have aided us in our approach in working with the Arab Spring countries. Appreciating the complexity of the changes taking place, it is clear this process will take some time. We must also recognise the tremendous efforts these countries are currently carrying out and will have to continue to carry out.

Q: Has the Arab Spring influenced the priorities of ICMPD Member States and partners?

A: Yes, it has. Efforts have been further increased to use the great opportunity for closer relations within the region and between the region and Europe based on person-to-person contacts. It has been recognised by the EU that an inclusive, comprehensive approach leads to better results. Many EU countries that have traditionally looked to the East are now looking to the South with great interest. As a result, there has been an increase in initiatives in the region by the EU and EU Member States, many of which are also ICMPD Member States. An example of such an initiative is the conference we organised in Tunisia in July, which dealt with the topic of the role of migration in the development of post-revolution Tunisia. The conference resulted in the European and Tunisian representatives reaching a high level of consensus on migration topics and expressing resolve to further the spirit of the conference through future initiatives.

Q: What are the next steps?

A: The processes and changes begun by the Arab Spring are still ongoing and volatile, so it is difficult to predict what the outcomes will be. An ultimate goal of the EU and its Member States is to create an area of ‘shared prosperity’ for both EU Member States and the countries of the North African/Middle East region. The most effective way to achieve this is to facilitate cooperation and dialogue.
The political changes that have swept parts of the Arab world since early 2011 pose both challenges and opportunities in the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy, especially in terms of migration policy development. Consequently, the nature and extent of ICMPD’s engagement with Europe’s neighbouring southern Mediterranean countries has been influenced by these profound events, prompting processes that have repositioned ICMPD’s strategic operations and dialogues in the Arab World in line with, and in response to, emerging social, economic and political realities in the region.

In Tunisia, increasing poverty, high unemployment and sharp inflation constituted the root causes of change in the country, with direct consequences on migratory flows, both within the region and from the region, to Europe. As a result of the developments that followed in the neighbouring countries of Egypt and Libya, respectively, tens of thousands of migrants have arrived on the shores of the European Union in 2011, while close to 1 million people have crossed into Tunisia itself from Libya since the outbreak of conflict in February 2011.

In the aftermath of the Tunisian revolution, and its powerful ripple effects in other parts of the Arab World, ICMPD re-asserted its balanced approach to migration management in the region, with a view to promoting a holistic response to the sudden exodus of people. On 7 March 2011, ICMPD announced its “five-point plan of action”, which called for a balanced approach in addressing emerging migration trends in the Mediterranean-Arab region. ICMPD’s position is underlined by the need to 1) address the immediate humanitarian concerns, 2) prevent the loss of life at sea, 3) anticipate an increase in the arrival of boats on European shores, 4) revisit the Mediterranean Neighbourhood Policy and 5) create synergies between migration and development for the benefit of rebuilding democratic societies.

From left to right: Mr. Mustapha Djemali, ICMPD Representative to the Maghreb region; Mr. Peter Widermann, ICMPD Director General; His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Mouldi Kefi, Tunisia’s Minister of Foreign Affairs; Mr. Lukas Gehrke, ICMPD Director for Southern Dimension; Ambassador Ali Goutali, Director General of the Diplomatic Institute for Training & Studies, Tunisia’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Irregular migration has been a focus of ICMPD for many years, and the Research Department has addressed the issue in a multitude of projects, which has contributed to a growing amount of literature on the subject. It has also helped support appropriate policy making responses to the phenomenon, particularly in Europe. ICMPD’s research projects, while focusing on European trends, also account for the other side of the story by looking at irregular migration in sending countries outside of the EU. These projects have stemmed from ICMPD’s rich experience in research on trafficking over the past decade.

In particular, the ICMPD Annual Yearbook on Illegal Migration, Smuggling and Trafficking in Central and Eastern Europe has been an important resource on the topic. Published annually for more than a decade, the yearbook highlights regional trends and developments based on a survey and an analysis of border management and border apprehension data from 22 states. The yearbook has been especially useful in presenting concrete results to national administrations, border guard authorities and EU institutions.

Currently, the Research Department is also working on three projects focusing on irregular migrants. Two of these projects, which are titled “The treatment of third-country nationals at the EU's external borders” and “The fundamental rights situation of irregular migrants in the European Union”, are studies for the Fundamental Rights Agency. The third project, a study titled “Health care for undocumented migrants in Switzerland”, is sponsored by the Swiss Federal Office of Public Health in cooperation with the EU-funded project NowHereLand (see www.nowhereland.info).

The FRA External Borders Study examines the treatment of third-country nationals at the EU’s external borders, in order to examine the specific challenges and enhance the protection of fundamental rights at these borders. This includes both third-country nationals crossing the EU’s maritime borders, as well as at specific land and airport border crossing points, covering a wide geographical range of 12 EU Member States. In addition, the project incorporates input from the other side
of the border, namely Morocco, Serbia, Tunisia, Turkey and the Ukraine.

Fundamental rights are also at the core of the study on the fundamental rights situation of irregular migrants, which researches the issues irregular immigrants in the EU deal with in accessing health, housing and minimum social assistance and in receiving education, employment and fair working conditions. Apart from comparative research across the entire EU, two sets of case studies conducted in 10 EU countries offer a comprehensive view of irregular migrants’ access to health care, as well as the particular situation of irregular migrants employed as domestic workers. The first two studies emanating from this project were published in July and October 2011, respectively, with others to follow in November 2011.

The Health Care for Undocumented Migrants Study was developed in parallel to the EU-wide project on “Health Care in Nowhereland: Improving Services for Undocumented Migrants in the EU”, situating the Swiss case within the wider European context. Its findings have been integrated into the EU project to work out the similarities and differences among the national health care systems and determine the best practices and policies. Policy briefs and full reports are available on the ICMPD Research website.

Past projects have also investigated the various facets of irregular immigration. Clandestino: Undocument Migration: Counting the Uncountable Data and Trends Across Europe, which finished in 2009, is one of several such projects. The project studied irregular migration in 11 EU Member States, as well as irregular transit migration in Morocco, Turkey and the Ukraine. It provided an inventory of data on undocumented migration in selected EU countries, analysed the data comparatively and proposed new methods for the evaluation and classification of data. The project produced the first transparent estimates of the population of undocumented migrants in the EU for three different points in time, suggesting that in 2008 the size of the irregular migrant population may have been between 1.9 and 3.8 million, down from between 3.1 and 5.2 million in 2002.

The project “REGINE: Regularisations in the European Union” dealt with regularisation practices in the EU and the impact of regularisations in Switzerland and the US. By gathering data from questionnaires to EU Member States, NGOs and trade unions, the project mapped the practices relating to regularisations in the EU, the relationship between regularisation policies and overall migration policy frameworks, the political position of different stakeholders at the national level and options for regularisation policies at the European level. The study shows that the vast majority of EU Member States use some form of regularisation measures, with regularisations increasingly following a humanitarian rationale and implemented in the form of permanent regularisation mechanisms.

The research collected from these projects approaches the issue of irregular migration in a variety of ways, illuminating the complexity of the phenomenon, while also offering ways forward. These studies have not only enriched the field by conducting comprehensive research in irregular migration and the problems that these migrants face, but also has provided policy suggestions, best practices and tools that can be used by policymakers in addressing these issues.
Latest Publications

Books


Policy Briefs (Factsheets)


Projects

Studies on Health Care for Undocumented Migrants in Switzerland:


Clandestino:


Regularisations in Europe (REGINE):

The Economist, in the past several months, has focused extensively on the topic of immigration and its impacts on Europe. This topic has become even more relevant as European countries are still suffering from the on-going financial crisis and are facing an increase in immigration from northern Africa as a result of the upheavals associated with the ‘Arab Spring’.

In an article from 27 August 2011 titled “Moving out, on and back”, The Economist discusses the impact of the financial crisis on immigration, especially in Europe. The argument made is that while the financial crisis has spurred some immigrants to return home and others to not leave their homeland at all, it has not stopped immigration. Rather, it has changed immigration patterns and destinations. This has made global migration patterns during this current period diverse and continually changing.

The article further contends that the continued flux of immigrants coming to European countries, many of which have high unemployment, has put pressure on some governments to limit the intake of immigrants. As a result, some countries have implemented policies to limit the number of entering immigrants. Great Britain, for example, has introduced a “migration cap” for workers who come from non-EU countries. Eastern European countries, such as Poland, are experimenting with plans to restrict the number of immigrants allowed in. Denmark has reintroduced limited border checks and has compensated immigrant workers who agree to return to their homeland. On the other hand, Sweden, for example, has liberalised its granting of work permits, while Germany has sought to increase the number of skilled immigrant workers it accepts. These examples reflect the varied approaches European governments have taken to dealing with immigration.

While immigration to Europe has not ceased, it has slowed down, contends The Economist. Migration into EU Member States dropped by 7% in 2009 and likely even further in 2010. Some European countries plagued by economic instability, such as Greece, have seen a rise in emigration. Many immigrants are now looking to countries in Asia as possible destinations, rather than the traditional European destinations or the USA. Moreover, migration research reveals that immigrants more often come and go between different destinations (“circular migration”) or move first to one destination on the way another one (“on-migration”).
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