ICMPD celebrated 15th Anniversary

On the occasion of ICMPD’s 15th Anniversary, a symposium on the Future of European Policy on Legal Migration was held in Vienna on 4 December 2008 at the premises of the Diplomatic Academy.

The event was chaired by Dr. Willibald Pahr, former Austrian Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs and former Chairman of the ICMPD Advisory Board. The opening speech was held by Dr. Maria Fekter, Austrian Federal Minister of Interior, who congratulated the organisation, of which “Austria is proud to be a founding member”. She stressed the importance of ICMPD’s past work and its future importance in the face of new challenges, and the Austrian expectations that ICMPD will continue making migration and integration in Austria and in Europe successful, “because it is needed, because of stability and also for quality of life for all, for those who are still here and also for those who want to come”.

Dr. Elisabeth Tichy-Fisslberger, Director General, Law and Consular Section of the Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs mentioned in her speech that ICMPD has built a very convincing reputation in Central and Eastern Europe and hoped that in the future there will be “even closer co-operation, not only between EU and ICMPD, but also between Austria and ICMPD”.

The other speakers, which included representatives of the European Commission, Sweden, the research and academic community, and ICMPD touched upon various topics connected to migration management and migration development over the past decades.

The dense symposium programme gave an opportunity to learn more about migration issues which most of the European countries had to cope with and resolve in the 1990ies, which eventually formed the migration, development and external policy strategies we know today. And exactly those new migration realities provoked discussion between several European states and led to the idea of creating a platform for informal consultations on migration - ICMPD.

It was mentioned repeatedly by some speakers that the initial focus of ICMPD activities was above all on illegal migration and asylum issues, but this has gradually altered and led into further activities in other migration related areas with the aim to build a more complex migration picture in ICMPD Member States and in the wider European region. As expressed in some of the speeches, future migration policy should be based on flexible and transparent criteria, reflecting needs of recipient countries and taking into account global migration trends.

The complete agenda and résumé of individual speeches is available from the ICMPD website: www.icmpd.org.
**15 Years ICMPD**

"**Analyse the facts and strengthen the competences of individuals and institutions**" is the motto under which ICMPD has been contributing to the migration debate and to the development of the relevant policies since 15 years.

The first part of the mandate was always at the focal point of interest for ICMPD staff and will remain so in the future. To analyse the facts means, first and foremost, to learn to understand the phenomena of migration over and over again. What motivates people to migrate? What are the migration patterns over a specific period within a country or region? Which actors are normally involved in the migration process? To what extent do national politics influence the decision to migrate and the migration pattern? These are questions that need to be asked – and answered – continually in order to examine the effectiveness of national migration- and asylum policy.

ICMPD also contributes to the rationalisation of the migration debate by examining and analysing the actions and motives of the various actors. This is of particular importance in times where exaggerated emphasis is placed upon alleged assumptions about specific migration phenomena or politically charged individual cases, thus complicating sustainable, evidence based policy making.

ICMPD’s commitment to contribute to resolving migration issues is expressed in the different research programmes and comparative analyses of national responses to migration challenges, but also in the preparation and implementation of working group meetings, seminars and conferences to exchange information and experiences. Thereby the objective is to open up new perspectives to those involved, provide food for thought and illuminate the various options, hence contributing to fact-oriented policy making.

This also illuminates the second part of the mission statement: strengthen the competences of individuals and institutions. ICMPD staff is constantly committed towards this goal. It is not a matter of making the organisation larger, more powerful or more influential, but only to provide those services required by the actors in the field of migration to develop and implement sustainable actions.

I am happy to see that this service orientation by a number of highly motivated and professionally performing staff members is more and more recognised by donors and states, which translates into a growing number of entrusted tasks and projects.

**Gottfried Zürcher,**
**ICMPD Director General**

**How it all started**

When I was Director of the Swiss Office for Refugees in the late 80’s and early 90’s, asylum and refugee authorities of Western European and Nordic countries regularly exchanged their respective experiences, practices and policies with UNHCR and IOM Geneva. Representatives from the USA, Canada and Australia, the traditional immigration countries were also sometimes present. Almost every year one of the delegations issued an invitation to an international workshop. Sweden, Austria and Switzerland were more or less at the forefront of this process and over time Jonas Widgren, the former Swedish Secretary of State of the Ministry of Labour and Migration, became the conceptor and manager of this so-called informal consultations on asylum and refugee policy. In 1992, these consultations were at a crisis point because of misunderstandings and policy differences with UNHCR. The respective multilateral dialogue was thus interrupted. Together with Jonas Widgren, Switzerland and Austria decided therefore to establish a new forum for international migration policy development to be located in Vienna. Austria sponsored the infrastructure and Switzerland the overall financing. A small competent staff was recruited and Jonas Widgren became the first director. Apart from ongoing analysis on potential migration flows, the tasks of the new Centre were to develop new concepts on legal and illegal migration and legitimate policies in view of voluntary return of asylum seekers whose request had been denied and consequently had to be reintegrated in their country of origin. As at this time migration pressure from Eastern European countries was imminent, ICMPD in Vienna could function as a kind of consultant clearing agent between East and West. In the course of the civil war in former Yugoslavia, the services of ICMPD grew in importance for the receiving countries and subsequently the Centre and its projects were more and more also financed by other states.

I also like to recall that in 1996, when Switzerland held the OSCE presidency, ICMPD offered part of its office space to a Swiss-led and IOM-supported task force of OSCE, which was mandated to prepare and perform the first national elections for citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina living outside of their home country. This exercise for about 550,000 persons located in 50 different countries all over the world proved to be very complex but was a success story.

Jonas Widgren unfortunately passed away much too early. He was a very hard and competent worker and dedicated to migration affairs. We did not only co-operate but were also friends. Gottfried Zürcher, earlier my advisor for legal and international affairs in Bern, was Jonas Widgren’s deputy and I was happy to hear that he became his successor.

I sincerely congratulate ICMPD for its 15th jubilee and am still very grateful for what ICMPD contributed so far for a better understanding and management of migration flows and policies. I wish ICMPD and its staff ongoing success and hope they can further play an important role in solving of one of the world’s bigger challenges.

**Peter Arbenz,**
**former Director of the Swiss Office for Refugees, Co-founder of ICMPD**
Migration Patterns - 15 years of change

We celebrate the 15th anniversary of ICMPD. 15 years is a short period even within one generation. But during these 15 years the patterns of migration have fundamentally changed.

In the beginning of the nineties of the last century after the fall of the Iron Curtain we were afraid of mass immigration from Russia and other former communist countries. This was also the reason for the convening of the Berlin Conference in 1992, which in fact was the beginning of intensive international co-operation in the field of migration. It was at the same time also the start of a process which later was called the Budapest Process and which concentrated on the prevention of irregular migration.

A second problem was the so-called guest workers who had been recruited mainly from former Yugoslavia but also from Turkey in the fifties and sixties of the twentieth century. They had been expected to stay for only a limited period and to return to their home countries after the end of their contract. In fact the majority of them settled down and brought their families to their host country. At that time most of the Western European countries which were traditionally emigration countries did not and were not prepared to recognise that they have become immigration countries. Countries like Austria, Switzerland, Germany and others therefore were not prepared for the changing pattern of migration.

Some farsighted migration experts, among them Jonas Widgren, the late first Director General of ICMPD, realised already at a very early stage the coming changes and the need for the development of new and effective migration policies. In 1993, the Ministries of Interior of Austria and Switzerland agreed to set up a common centre for this purpose in Vienna. It started as a department of a private Austrian association and this was the beginning of ICMPD. Step by step, it was transformed into an intergovernmental organisation with the status, privileges and immunities of an international organisation. In addition to Austria and Switzerland other countries joined ICMPD and it received the status of a permanent observer to the UN.

Of course, in the mean time the migratory situation has changed too. Today most of the western European countries have accepted that they have become immigration countries. In fact they need immigration in view of the demographic development during the last decades and their ageing populations. Therefore the regulation of immigration and in particular of labour immigration has become an urgent problem. The same is true concerning the integration of immigrants in the host society in order to prevent their social marginalisation and formation of ghettos.

A second most urging problem is the mass immigration during the last years, in particular from Africa, over the Mediterranean, mainly to Italy and Spain. This requires common efforts and co-operation, not only among European countries but also with countries of origin and of transit in Africa.

The European Union, in particular within the Schengen area, has developed to a large zone of free movement for persons from the Arctic Sea to the Mediterranean without any border control. This facilitates irregular migration and constitutes a special challenge for the countries concerned. A common and co-ordinated control of irregular migration movements and of asylum seekers has been intensified and relevant legislation to a large extent harmonised. In general the EU has played a more prominent role in the field of migration.

In this new and permanent changing environment the activities and functions of ICMPD have changed as well. ICMPD today is first of all a service institution to assist its Member States in meeting the challenges of migration.

Dr Willibald Pahr, former Austrian Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs and former Chairman of the ICMPD Advisory Board

Jonas Widgren’s Response to the Need for a Migration Dialogue

Jonas Widgren was very wise to establish the International Centre for Migration Policy Development. That was his response to the Austrian and Swiss governments in 1993. Both governments wanted an organisation to promote comprehensive and sustainable migration policies and to function as a service exchange mechanism for governments and organisations in the wider European region. Thanks to ICMPD, we got a well-functioning secretariat for the Budapest process. Many conferences and seminars were organised for the new EU-Member States from Eastern Europe. They received valuable advice in their negotiations for EU membership. Difficult questions like the situation of the Roma people in these countries were put on the political agenda as well as the question of how to heal the wounds for mistreated and raped women during the conflict in the Balkan countries. As Swedish Commissioner to the EU, I was privileged to have ICMPD as an important adviser and we had a good co-operation on the fight against trafficking of women and children. ICMPD is today a respected international organisation with a good reputation. All my best wishes and congratulations.

Anita Gradin, former Swedish minister of migration and EU-commissioner

Photo: Anita Gradin and Jonas Widgren.
The First Steps of the Budapest Group

The ministerial meeting of the Budapest Group in 1993 was an exquisite event. It was representative of a New World which was to flourish before our very eyes. The European Commission was represented by one of its Commissioners, Padraig Flynn, who was duly impressed by the splendour of the 19th century architecture at the Hungarian Parliament and its ideal setting, along the banks of the Danube.

The work which we completed during this meeting, bringing together Member States of the EU, the then candidate-countries (Austria, Sweden and Finland) and the new democracies from Central Europe was even more impressive. No clearly established working rules existed as yet. This sort of situation enabled Jonas Widgren to demonstrate his limitless capacities and talents. The free circulation of people all around the entire European continent was a thoroughly new idea. It scared certain people to bits, because it justified the need to agree on efficient principles to prevent any abuse of it. Jonas, however, understood that this was a new unique chance for our continent. Imagine all these different countries having to work together, after a separation of more than 40 years by the Iron Curtain. His real talent unifying people initiated this particular dialogue! From one Working Group to the next, we gradually elaborated a series of basic principles. They were most helpful for the candidate countries to aid them in their future accession to the EU. I particularly recall one of these meetings held in a Post-Socialist hotel located south of Prague, where Jonas convinced me that the major work is done by networking between meetings rather than during meetings. We had an impressive number of breaks during which a better understanding grew step-by-step, firstly between human beings and then rubbed off on the institutions these people were representing.

All this work enabled the adoption of 55 recommendations endorsed at ministerial level during a Pan-European conference held in Prague in 1997. However, this time the location was the impressive Baroque rooms of the former Royal Palace of the Hradcany. Ministers from all European countries and representatives from European organisations, amongst them the Commission, expressed their support for this ambitious objective.

Through this activity which continued for many years, Jonas demonstrated that he was a forerunner for the unification of the European continent which took place formally with the accession of 10 new Member States in 2004 and 2 further Member States at the beginning of 2007.

All of us who worked with him will remember how important it was to have the chance to co-operate with somebody having a clear vision to re-design the new architecture of our continent. So it was a great shock to learn that he passed away so suddenly in the summer of 2004, only a couple of weeks before Adrian Fortescue. Both of them will remain alive in our memories as visionaries for the European ideal.

Wenceslas de Lobkowicz, Advisor; Civil Society Dialogue, Directorate General Enlargement, European Commission, Brussels

Early Days - A staff member remembers the very beginnings of ICMPD

My start with ICMPD was rather accidental. I was at the time working with the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Human Rights (BIM) on a short-term contract. One day in 1993 two gentlemen visited BIM looking for staff. They were to found a new organisation and were looking for staff. Their names were Jonas Widgren and Peter Arbenz. I was hired on the spot and started my work for the International Centre for Migration Policy Development on 1st August 1993, in two rather shabby back rooms on the second floor of Möllwaldplatz 4.

From there, Jonas and I started to build up an international co-operation network in the area of migration policies. As research, from the very beginning, was considered a relevant part of the new Centre, a third colleague joined ICMPD in September 1993, the Swiss-Austrian researcher Irene Stacher. A few months later, the ICMPD staff was increased with Tamás Kiss and Gerda Theuermann. One of the first efforts we made was to address letters to European Ministers of Interior/Justice, signed by the respective Ministers of Austria and Switzerland, to invite their countries to join ICMPD, in order to tackle the Europe-wide endeavour of migration management.

From its very beginning, ICMPD gave a chance to interns to get insight into an international institution dealing with the crucial issue of migration. Renowned researchers and diplomats also spent a few months with ICMPD; I remember especially Prof. Phil Martin from the University of California in Davis, USA, Nudzeim Recica, who later was Deputy Minister of Civil Affairs and Communications of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Ambassador to Denmark, or Nikolaus Marschik, who was until recently Head of Cabinet of the Austrian Foreign Minister.

In 1996, a third Member State, Hungary, joined the Centre, and the modified basic agreement on the Establishment and Functioning of ICMPD referred to ICMPD as an “international organisation”. From the granting of privileges and immunities in 1997 by the Austrian Government to the Headquarters Agreement with the Republic of Austria in 1999, from originally 2 Member States to currently 11, from the first months with 3 staff members to about 60, from two shabby back rooms at Möllwaldplatz to a big office with almost 900 m² in Gonzagagasse in the centre of Vienna – what a development. And the perspectives for the coming years look very promising.

Tragically, Jonas Widgren passed away far too early in 2004, so he cannot be with us to celebrate these successful 15 years.

I am proud to be an ICMPD staff member from the very beginning and I am looking forward to the further development of the organisation and to its 20-year celebration in 2013.

Sigrid Farber, Executive Assistant to the Director General
**Bulgaria’s Involvement in ICMPD Activities**

In June 1998 the Minister of Interior of the Republic of Bulgaria and the ICMPD Director General signed a Co-operation Agreement. Some years later, in October 2003 the Bulgarian Minister of Interior and the Director General of ICMPD signed a Declaration of Intent between the Ministry of Interior of Bulgaria and ICMPD. Hereby Bulgaria obtained a seat in the Steering Group of ICMPD as a Member State. ICMPD supported and assisted Bulgaria on its way towards the EU in harmonisation of the legislation, in establishing policy and structures to combat illegal migration, in fulfilling the EU criteria on visa liberalisation and being removed from the EU Visa Negative List.

Bulgaria’s participation in:

- **ICMPD Anti-trafficking Activities:**
  Since September 2006 - co-operation in the framework of the Programme to Support the Development of Transnational Referral Mechanisms for Trafficked Persons in South Eastern Europe as a junior partner;
  April 2007 in Sofia – hosting the first Regional seminar under the programme that gave the guidelines on the practical implementation of the catalogue of measures to be taken first at national level, and later at regional level.

- **Migration Policy Activities:**
  The Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Bulgaria is one of the partners in the ICMPD project on Strengthening Capacities and Co-operation in the Identification of Forged and Falsified Travel Documents at the Moldova-Romania border, which has recently been approved for funding by the European Commission.

- **Budapest Process Activities:**
  Active participation in all the Budapest Process activities since its establishment in 1991;
  April 2001 in Sofia – hosting the Budapest Process Senior Officials’ meeting;
  March 2006 in Sofia – hosting and chairing the first meeting of the Working Group on Development of Effective Migration Systems in the CIS Countries;
  November 2008 in Sofia - hosting and chairing the first meeting of the Working Group on the Black Sea Region*. The WG had an inclusive, flexible character and focused on the management of the migration processes – countering illegal migration and managing legal migration from a regional point of view by using a thematic approach.

  *Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Bulgaria*

**ICMPD strengthens Switzerland’s Migration Policy**

Switzerland, as co-founder of the International Centre for Migration Policy Development, has the pleasure to sincerely convey its best wishes to the organisation and its Director General, Mr. Gottfried Zürcher, on the occasion of its 15th Anniversary for its outreach.

We would particularly like to mention the excellent co-operation which we could always rely on from Member States of the Centre in regard to migration management. We would especially like to underline the constructive and effective Kosovo Information Project and also the Mediterranean Transit Migration dialogue (MTM), established, among others, in order to prevent illegal migration in the Mediterranean region, as well as the success encountered by the Centre within the framework of the Budapest Process. In the course of implementing the Schengen Agreements, Switzerland welcomed the support of the experts provided by ICMPD for its final evaluation. This expertise remains an important factor for Switzerland entering into the Schengen area.

Since its establishment, the good advice and the projects developed by ICMPD have contributed to strengthen migration policy in Switzerland: analyses of actual and potential migration flows towards European countries, observation on the evolution of the situation in main countries of origin of migrants, as well as the development of measures designed to improve the identification and control of migration flows.

This anniversary is the occasion for our country to thank ICMPD for its work and to reiterate our will to continue actively cooperating with the Centre in the future.

*Federal Office for Migration, Switzerland*

**EU-ASEAN Migration and Border Management Programme**

Together with the Crown Agents for Oversea Governments and Administrations Ltd as lead partner, ICMPD is implementing the 3-year Technical Assistance for the EU-ASEAN Migration and Border Management Programme for the European Commission from January 2009.

The programme aims at supporting the development of a more efficient and coherent Integrated Border Management System for the legal movements of goods and persons, while at the same time better combating transnational crime, illegal migration and trafficking in human beings in Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

The main target groups are the Immigration (ASEAN Directors-General of Immigration Departments and Heads of Consular Affairs Divisions of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs – DGICM) and Customs Authorities of all ASEAN countries, while also the training institutions and judiciary of the ASEAN countries will directly benefit from project activities.

The programme consists of three components. Component I aims at strengthening the regional institutional network; Component II is focusing on exchange of information between Interpol National Central Bureaus and headquarters, and is being implemented by Interpol; and the goal of Component III is to enhance capacities of selected Border Crossing Points. ICMPD is responsible for the modules related to travel documents and IDs, including related procedures at the borders and national databases, as well as to information exchange and links between border agencies and prosecution. It also supports Crown Agents in the implementation of the other modules with its expertise and the identification of relevant short-term experts, specifically in the area of training, as well as for information exchange and links between border agencies and prosecution.
Transnational Referral: A core element of trafficking policies in Europe

The “Programme to Support the Development of Transnational Referral Mechanisms for Trafficked Persons in South-Eastern Europe” (TRM) seeks to ensure that victims of trafficking receive professional care and support when moving between countries for return, resettlement or participation in trials; and to empower trafficked persons to restart a self-determined life.

The countries of South-Eastern Europe have made serious efforts to establish anti-trafficking strategies and action plans, in order to ensure that all trafficked persons have access to comprehensive assistance and protection schemes. At present, many parts of national referral mechanisms are already developed, but their implementation needs further support.

TRM, which is implemented by ICMPD’s anti-trafficking team and funded by USAID, seeks to standardise and formalise the transnational components of victim assistance and protection schemes. It is a pilot programme, based on and incorporating existing initiatives and good practices relating to transnational referrals of victims of trafficking in the SEE region and beyond.

The TRM programme has an innovative approach: it links the full process of referral, from initial identification, through return and assistance between countries of transit, destination and origin. The project actively involves co-operation between different government institutions and non-governmental actions. This programme is designed, piloted and endorsed by all participating SEE partners, built on their expertise, experience and good practices, as well as on identified victims’ needs, and with the support and input of anti-trafficking experts from SEE and outside the region.

What were the reasons for implementing the TRM programme in South-Eastern Europe?

First, our partners in South Eastern Europe already have existing and proven patterns of regional co-operation. The region possesses key preconditions such as existing and institutionalised national co-ordination structures and anti-trafficking responses. Also, in South-Eastern Europe most countries are confronted with the fact that they are countries of origin, transit and destination. As such, the region presents an excellent testing ground for models of transnational referral systems that lend themselves for replication in other parts of the world. That is why the programme targets Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia.

At the moment, the project is in its fourth and final phase: TRM standards and procedures are being developed in and for the SEE region based on actual trafficking cases. They are piloted mainly on the basis of intra-regional cases in order to be available as model for the wider European region and beyond. And indeed, the TRM concept is spreading: ICMPD was asked to make an assessment of conditions for the development of a TRM for victims of trafficking in human beings in Ukraine, and within the European Union Italy, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Portugal are in the process of developing a TRM mechanism with Albania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, and Romania: countries where the TRM is already well underway.

What can be concluded out of the TRM experience so far?

Foremost, the co-operation mechanisms are being strengthened, not only between the SEE countries, but also with other European and world actors. The success of the TRM is a good ground for further development and global expansion of the anti-trafficking mechanisms.

TRM definitely has changed the role of SEE in the European-wide fight against trafficking. Our partners have become advocates of the TRM, sharing their expertise, know-how, good practice and lessons learned for comprehensive and appropriate transnational victim assistance with other European countries outside the region.

Repatriation Solutions through Information Services

Since 1997, ICMPD has developed principles and operational procedures in support of migration management and asylum systems by facilitating all related aspects of decision-making and supporting more integrated, durable, hence successful return processes, through the provision of country-of-origin information.

These services to States and organisations alike first became available in the course of the implementation of the Repatriation Information Centre (RIC) throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, financially supported by UNHCR and later by ECHO. The project took place from early 1997 until the end of 1999. The project collected information from more than 120 different sources, prepared topical and municipality fact sheets (TIFS and MIFS); simultaneously more than 15,000 information requests were processed, all with a view to facilitate returns to Bosnia. The ICMPD office in Sarajevo became the Headquarters of the first ICMPD diplomatic mission.

Between March 2000 and June 2003, the Source Country Information Systems of ICMPD, in co-operation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) jointly implemented the SCIS Kosovo Information Project (KIP), each acting within their own sphere of expertise and capacities. First with the financial support of Switzerland, and with up to 11 European States participating at a time, KIP answered more than 53,000 individual information over the project timeframe in an average of 10 working days, paving the way to safe and durable decision-making in regard to repatriation to Kosovo, simultaneously producing MIFS and TIFS. The services to participating states included a digital photography section and samples of various identity documents.

Since 2003, ICMPD has been implementing the Sri Lanka Information Project, first with the financial support of the European Commission, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. This pilot project was successful in the sense that the UK Home Office has chosen to continue supporting the activities for the benefit of their repatriation efforts. This project is jointly implemented with the Sri Lanka Ministry of Nation Building and Estate Infrastructure Development.

Jean Lanoue, Senior Legal Advisor
CURRENT AND RECENT EVENTS

The Budapest Process
Black Sea WG met in Sofia

The first meeting of the Black Sea Working Group of the Budapest Process was held in Sofia on 13 and 14 November 2008. The establishment of the Working Group had been suggested at the Budapest Process Senior Officials meeting in Trabzon in May 2008. The first Working Group meeting, chaired and hosted by the Bulgarian Ministry of Interior and the Bulgarian Border Police, focused on irregular transit migration through the Black Sea region and on intergovernmental co-operation.

The participants agreed that participation in the Working Group should be flexible and include the countries concerned by migration flows through the Black Sea region. The participants further stated that the Working Group should cover a wide range of migration related priorities, be technical in nature, and contribute to already existing efforts and initiatives in the region. The participants also asked the Secretariat (ICMPD) to explore possibilities for the inclusion of countries further away along the migration routes relevant for the region for the purpose of particular meetings of the Working Group.

On 15-16 December 2008, about 50 representatives of Arab and European Partners (APS and EPS) and Partner Agencies (PA) as well as Observers met informally in Paris, France for an expert meeting in the framework of the Dialogue on Mediterranean Transit Migration (MTM) with a special focus on the Interactive Map on Migration (i-Map: www.imap-migration.org).

The objectives of the meeting, organised by ICMPD and hosted by the French Ministry of Immigration, Integration, National Identity and Solidarity Development during the French Presidency of the European Union were to prepare the launching of the 4th Phase of the MTM: A Dialogue in Action, present its activities on Pillar I (migration-security nexus), Pillar II (migration-development nexus), to report on the development of the i-Map in 2008 and to prepare the further development of the i-Map in line with the priorities and needs of APS and EPS with regards to the methodology, geographic and thematic scope, type of information available and the role of the partner agencies.

Until December 2008, the i-Map was supported exclusively by contributions from several European countries. From January 2009, for a duration of two years, the further development of the MTM i-Map will be co-funded by the European Commission.

“Chechens in the European Union” - ICMPD Researchers Contributed to Publication

On October 27, 2008 the first research publication on Chechens was presented by the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior. Two ICMPD researchers contributed to the publication with an article on Chechen migration flows (Martin Hofmann & David Reichel (2008): Chechen Migration Flows to Europe – a Statistical Perspective, pp. 9-26). The article analyses the present size, structure and dynamics of Chechen migration flows to Europe from a statistical perspective. In spite of methodological limitations, namely that Chechens are counted as Russian citizens in statistics, some major trends are discernable.

Between 1997 and 2006 more than 170,000 asylum applications were submitted by Russian citizens. The majority of those applicants were ethnic Chechens. The numbers peaked in 2003 with almost 40,000 applications and decreased significantly afterwards. Chechen migration to Europe constitutes a comparatively recent phenomenon which increasingly concentrates on specific target countries, comprising Poland, Germany, Austria, France, Belgium and France. It is estimated that around 30,000 Chechen refugees were hosted by the top five receiving countries which is almost 80 percent of all Chechen refugees recognised in Europe.
The Czech Republic, during its EU Presidency in the first half of 2009, will host a Ministerial Conference with the title “Building Migration Partnerships”. ICMPD has been supporting the Czech Ministry of Interior in organising four preparatory meetings for this conference.

The Ministerial Conference “Building Migration Partnerships” will take place on 27-28 April 2009 and the following four preparatory meetings at the level of senior officials have paved or will pave the way for the conference:

- 1st Preparatory meeting, Prague, 30-31 October 2008
- 2nd Preparatory meeting, Antalya, Turkey, 16-17 February 2009
- 3rd Preparatory meeting, Bucharest, Romania, March 2009
- 4th Preparatory meeting, Prague, 26 April 2009

The 1st Preparatory meeting in Prague on 30-31 October 2008 gathered representatives on senior officials level from 39 countries (EU MS, Western Balkans, Commonwealth of Independent States), 3 international organisations (CIS Executive Committee, IOM and UNHCR), Frontex, Europol and the European Commission (DG JLS, DG RELEX). Representatives of France (former EU Presidency), Sweden (EU Presidency during the second half of 2009), as well as the European Commission supported the Czech Republic and its intention to organise the Ministerial Conference under the Czech EU Presidency with the objective to support the EU Global Approach to Migration to the Eastern and South-Eastern Regions Neighbouring the European Union in their statements.

The gathering allowed for active discussions on five thematic papers (illegal migration, return and readmission, labour migration, migration and development and integration).

The results of the meeting have formed a basis for the process of preparation of ministerial declaration to be adopted at the Ministerial Conference.