

VIENNA MIGRATION CONFERENCE 2021

Reimagining migration partnerships: Challenges, opportunities and strategies

19-20 October 2021

Palais Niederösterreich, Vienna

The Vienna Migration Conference (VMC) is ICMPD's annual flagship event and one of the most relevant international platforms for **top-level discussion on migration in Europe and beyond**. Each year, in autumn, the VMC offers an indispensable opportunity to take stock of the latest developments in the migration sphere and dive deeply into the most relevant issues affecting mobility from a policy and strategic viewpoint.

Making use of ICMPD's wide-ranging expertise and global network, the VMC convenes politicians, senior officials, experts and practitioners from governments, international organisations, civil society, academia, the private sector and the media to debate the most burning issues of migration governance.

This year's theme

Prompted by the need to move the migration agenda forward and achieve tangible results, despite the continued policy gridlock inside the union, the EU has turned its attention outwards. The New Pact tabled a year ago has not (yet) broken new ground on reforming the region's migration management architecture, but it has given new impetus to strengthen cooperation with key partners in the neighbourhood and along the main migration routes to Europe. Building on five years of discussions at the VMC on migration diplomacy and

cooperation frameworks between regions and countries of origin, transit and destination – in a changing world – we need to **reimagine migration partnerships**. Partnerships that are robust enough to withstand change, realistic in their ambition and built on reciprocity. How can we re-imagine cooperation along the routes to Europe to deliver better migration outcomes – now – and for post-pandemic recovery in the medium term? Conference sessions will focus on **challenges, opportunities** and **strategies** for spurring migration partnership in Europe's immediate neighbourhood and the wider world. The conference will discuss the geopolitics of migration diplomacy, assessing the major sticking points between key players; ask how whole-of-route approaches can address irregular migration; and reflect on whether the Union's difficulties over internal solidarity mean it has a credibility problem externally.

“Reimagining” means exactly that. VMC2021 will investigate what ‘game-changing’ trends that could alter the landscape of negotiations, and make the seemingly impossible possible. Inspiration will be sought from outside Europe's neighbourhood, from across the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean. And there will be a constant focus on escaping the binary idea that migration partnership is a game of chess between two centralised authorities but rather facilitating a coming together of many complementary actors and initiatives at all levels of society.

Conference format

The VMC is the most important event in ICMPD's calendar where the organisation showcases its vast knowledge and expertise, and its unique convening power. As the world is still in the grips of a pandemic, the VMC2021 will, again, need to adapt its normal scope and size. In 2020, the VMC was a [fully virtual conference](#). In anticipation that circumstances will allow a gradual return to normality by autumn 2021, this year's conference will take a **hybrid format**.

On 19-20 October, about 150 key stakeholders of the migration world will convene at [Palais Niederösterreich](#) for a 1.5 day conference in Vienna. For the small, **handpicked group of participants** who will be invited to Vienna, the opportunity to meet in person and to network will give the conference a special added value this year. Special efforts will be invested into preparing for and facilitating networking opportunities during the conference. Online streaming of key parts of the Conference will bring the world to the conference and secure broad outreach and participation despite COVID-19 related travel restrictions.

On 18 October, the eve of the VMC, a **“Migration Futures Dinner”** at [Weltmuseum](#) will bring together about 30 key migration agenda setters, thought leaders and influencers in the field to stimulate an exchange of ideas on the future of European migration policy development and innovation. ICMPD is most grateful to the Robert Bosch Stiftung for their support in hosting this unique dinner event.