ICMPD
International Centre for
Migration Policy Development

Making Migration Better
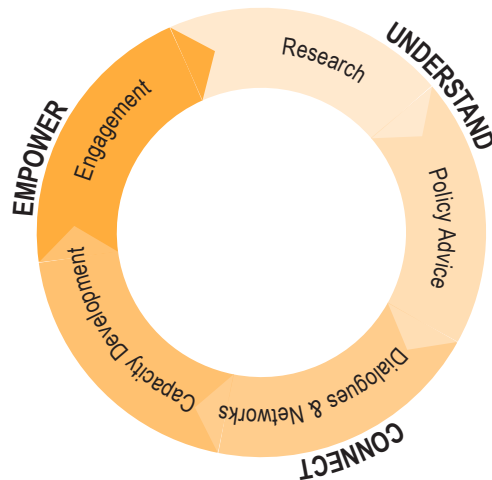
ANNUAL
REPORT

ICMPD in a Nutshell

KEY FIGURES

More than 90 projects in over 90 countries

544 employees

74 nationalities

21 Member States

31 offices

€714 million contracted project volume

DRIVING IMPACT

UNDERSTAND
the challenges and needs of our partners

CONNECT
all relevant stakeholders

EMPOWER
governments and administrations on the ground

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

→ Asylum and International Protection

→ Border Management and Security

→ Capacity Development

→ Diaspora and Migrants

→ Economy, Education and the Private Sector

→ Governance

→ Integration and Social Cohesion

→ Irregular Migration

→ Legal and Labour Migration

→ Migration and Development

→ Migration and Environment

→ Migration and Health

→ Migration Dialogues

→ Migration Narratives and Public Opinion

→ Policy

→ Research

→ Return and Reintegration

→ Trafficking in Human Beings

ICMPD is an international organisation based in Vienna and has 21 Member States: Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Malta, the Netherlands, Republic of North Macedonia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland and Türkiye.

We build evidence-driven migration policy options and governance systems that engage and equip our partners with effective, forward-leaning responses to opportunities and pragmatic solutions to complex regional migration and mobility challenges.

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2024
ANNUAL
REPORT

TABLE OF CONTENTS FOR THE ICMPD ANNUAL REPORT 2024

A WORLD ON THE MOVE

Michael Spindelegger, Director General of ICMPD, on a year of manifold changes around the world, the focus on migration during election campaigns, the opportunities that legal migration offers the European Union and ICMPD's strategy for managing the expectations of potential migrants by providing fact-based information.

Mr Spindelegger, the end of the year will mark the end of your mandate as Director General of ICMPD. What are your plans for the rest of your term?

Michael Spindelegger: My goal is to position the organisation in such a way that a smooth handover is ensured. This includes providing ICMPD with a variety of projects and strengthening its position as the first port of call for European countries for projects that help manage migration. Additionally, I plan to strengthen the structures in the various regions where we operate. We need to be as sustainable as possible. Whether I achieve this or not remains to be seen.

ICMPD has grown significantly in recent years; the number of employees has more than tripled under your leadership and many more countries have joined as Member States. 2024 was another momentous year. What have been the most important developments over the last 12 months?

In 2024, we made significant progress as an institution. A major milestone was certainly Ireland's accession to ICMPD, a country from a part of Europe where we had not previously had a strong presence. Furthermore, we established a Partnership Platform with Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and Lebanon, enabling closer cooperation without these countries having to become formal members. When the new EU Pact on Migration and Asylum was adopted, ICMPD developed national implementation plans for four Member States. This demonstrates the high regard for our expertise. Moreover, we launched new programmes to manage migration more effectively in the long term.

2024 was also a year of many elections around the world. When we spoke a year ago, you predicted that migration would be a decisive factor in many of these elections. Has this been confirmed?

Migration was one of the dominant topics in election campaigns in both

> **Migration is a constant challenge – an ongoing issue that must be handled with political sensitivity and strategic planning.**

Europe and the USA, and this will continue, as it was also one of the defining issues in the German elections in 2025. Migration is a constant challenge – an ongoing issue that must be handled with political sensitivity and strategic planning. Many governments are under pressure to find a balance between humanitarian obligations and national interests. Moreover, there are always new developments: new routes, new trends and, of course, new conflicts and disasters. Whenever this happens, new countries suddenly come into focus and other countries must always be ready to respond.

Why is migration so difficult to manage?

Many governments failed to prepare for various scenarios. They thought that after the high migration numbers of 2015/16, the situation would normalise. But that has not been the case. We had very high numbers again after COVID-19. In 2024, there were more than a million asylum applications in Europe, the third highest figure since 2016. Governments need clear strategies and long-term plans to address this issue effectively. Then they can build trust and communicate clearly. The media play a significant role, as they often fuel a polarised debate instead of allowing a factual discussion.

One of the most significant developments in recent months has been the situation in Syria. The overthrow of Bashar al-Assad has brought about enormous change. How do you expect the country to develop?

The situation in Syria is, of course, a central concern for our organisation. Many of our Member States are already inquiring about the topic of Syrian refugees returning to their home country. As host countries, they want to understand the conditions under which this is possible and how to prepare for it. The principle is simple: return follows reconstruction. Without reconstruction, there will be no large-scale return. However, there are also moments in time when those wishing to return take the first step. Governments must be ready to seize these moments.

The media play a significant role, as they often fuel a polarised migration debate rather than factual discussions.

It is striking that populists in many countries wanted to immediately deport refugees as soon as Assad was overthrown.

That is, of course, highly irresponsible. Not every part of the country can provide peace and security. This issue needs to be clarified. But I believe that the European Union needs to develop a common strategy. At the moment, each Member State sends its own delegation to Syria to assess the situation at first hand. This should be a European effort, just like organising a conference on reconstruction.

How will the war in Ukraine continue to affect migration?

If Russia makes significant military advances, this would lead to more

people fleeing the country. Estimates suggest that up to 10 million more Ukrainians could seek refuge in Europe, many more than during previous refugee movements. The EU must prepare for this, especially since the temporary protection mechanism – which allows Ukrainians to reside in the EU without going through the asylum procedure – is in effect until March 2026. Many European countries also still need long-term solutions to successfully facilitate the integration process for Ukrainians. Therefore, I believe that Ukraine will remain at the top of the European agenda.

Have you noticed any changes in the willingness of European governments to help Ukraine?

When Russia's full-scale war on Ukraine began in February 2022, the willingness of EU populations to help was overwhelming. This has not changed significantly, but a massive new wave of refugees could put it to the test. Sentiment towards Ukrainians in the EU will probably depend on how many Ukrainians eventually

return and how the European labour market develops.

Is integration into the European labour market still a challenge?

There are significant differences between European countries. In Denmark, for example, about 70% of Ukrainian refugees are employed, while in Germany the figure is only 30%. One of the reasons for this difference is Germany's welfare system, which provides few incentives to find employment. Jobs would be available almost everywhere in Europe, yet refugees and migrants often struggle to have their qualifications recognised and must overcome many language barriers to achieve this. Poland, for example, has developed targeted programmes to facilitate rapid integration into the labour market. Ukrainian refugees in Poland receive work permits as well as targeted funding and language courses. Within months, a high proportion of Ukrainian migrants were in employment.

What other regions of the world – that are not as prominent in European news as

Europe is facing a shortage of skilled workers and legal migration could help close this gap.

Ukraine – does ICMPD include in its migration forecasts?

The situation in South America is particularly alarming. Venezuela, Colombia and Peru are now among the top countries of origin for migrants in Europe. With US President Donald Trump pursuing a very strict migration and immigration policy, this could increase further. Spain, in particular, may become a more attractive destination. South Americans can still enter the country without a visa. As they share a common language, the barriers to integration are low. So far, Spain has been able to absorb migration flows well because its demand for labour is high. The question is how long this will continue. The fact that many migrants enter the EU via Spain and may then potentially move on to the wealthier countries of Central and Northern Europe to apply for asylum there will lead to further discussions about the distribution of migrants

within Europe. Africa and the ongoing crisis in the Middle East also remain sources of migration management challenges due to both regional conflicts and economic conditions.

Are there any new approaches to addressing migration?

At ICMPD, we have had positive experiences with Migrant Resource Centres. In countries like Pakistan or Bangladesh, we provide potential migrants with objective information about their realistic prospects of obtaining asylum or finding work in Europe. We explain how many of their compatriots have applied for asylum in Europe, how many have actually been granted it and how many have been sent back. Through the Migrant Resource Centres, we have reached 14 million people in recent years. And many have decided against illegal migration simply because of the information we provide.

And what other new possibilities are there?

We believe that a number of "multipurpose migration centres" could be set up along the main migration routes. The idea is to provide information to people considering migrating, and also to give European companies the opportunity to find potential employees and even offer them training. Europe is facing a shortage of skilled workers and legal migration could help close this gap. So far, too little consideration has been given to legal migration.

You have led ICMPD for nine years now. What have you personally taken away from this experience?

I have learned that migration is an incredibly complex issue. Working with our international teams has taught me how much commitment and knowledge goes into this field. With the right approaches, it is indeed possible to make a difference. I have come to realise that effective migration policy is not just a national issue, but also a global one that requires collaboration and strategic thinking.

EDITORIAL

II

Michael Spindelegger, 65, joined ICMPD as Director General in early 2016 and was unanimously elected to his second term. During his political career, he served as Austria's Vice Chancellor, Minister for Foreign Affairs and leader of the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP). Mr Spindelegger studied law and is married with two children.

MIGRANT RESOURCE CENTRES: A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO MIGRATION GOVERNANCE

Access to reliable information helps prevent risky journeys and supports safer, legal pathways. ICMPD's Migrant Resource Centres have become essential in this effort, offering guidance, resources and other support to migrants at every stage while strengthening migration governance in partner countries.

> Regular impact assessments demonstrate that ICMPD's MRCs play a crucial role in addressing irregular migration.

In 2016, ICMPD established its first Migrant Resource Centre (MRC) in Lahore, Pakistan, in response to large-scale mixed migration movements. Funded by the European Union, this initiative was part of a broader strategy to strengthen migration cooperation and partnerships within the Silk Routes region, complementing the expansion of the Budapest Process and the adoption of the 2013 Ministerial Declaration, *Silk Routes Partnership for Migration*.

Today, ICMPD operates 10 MRCs in 6 locations in the capitals and major cities of the Silk Routes and Central Asian countries. MRCs assist outgoing, intending, potential and returning migrants in making well-informed decisions, accessing necessary services and understanding their rights. Their mandate is to cover 360 degrees of migration governance. Operated jointly with partner governments and located within

the ministries responsible for migration management, they are a prime example of effective and genuine partnership on migration matters. MRCs provide comprehensive information on migration-related challenges and opportunities through awareness-raising initiatives and campaigns, community education, individual counselling, and reintegration support and referral. MRCs have shown themselves to be a strategic investment in line with EU and partner country objectives in migration cooperation.

The adoption of EU internal migration reforms in 2024 coincided with growing calls from leaders and policymakers to also strengthen the "external dimension" of migration policy by addressing migration and displacement closer to its source. With security and political concerns driving the agenda, the EU has increasingly focused its efforts on reducing irregular migration,

improving the effectiveness of returns and developing "innovative solutions". Amid record global displacement and continued irregular arrivals in Europe, as well as demographic challenges and skills shortages in Europe, MRCs contribute to fostering migration solutions that reconcile multiple objectives.

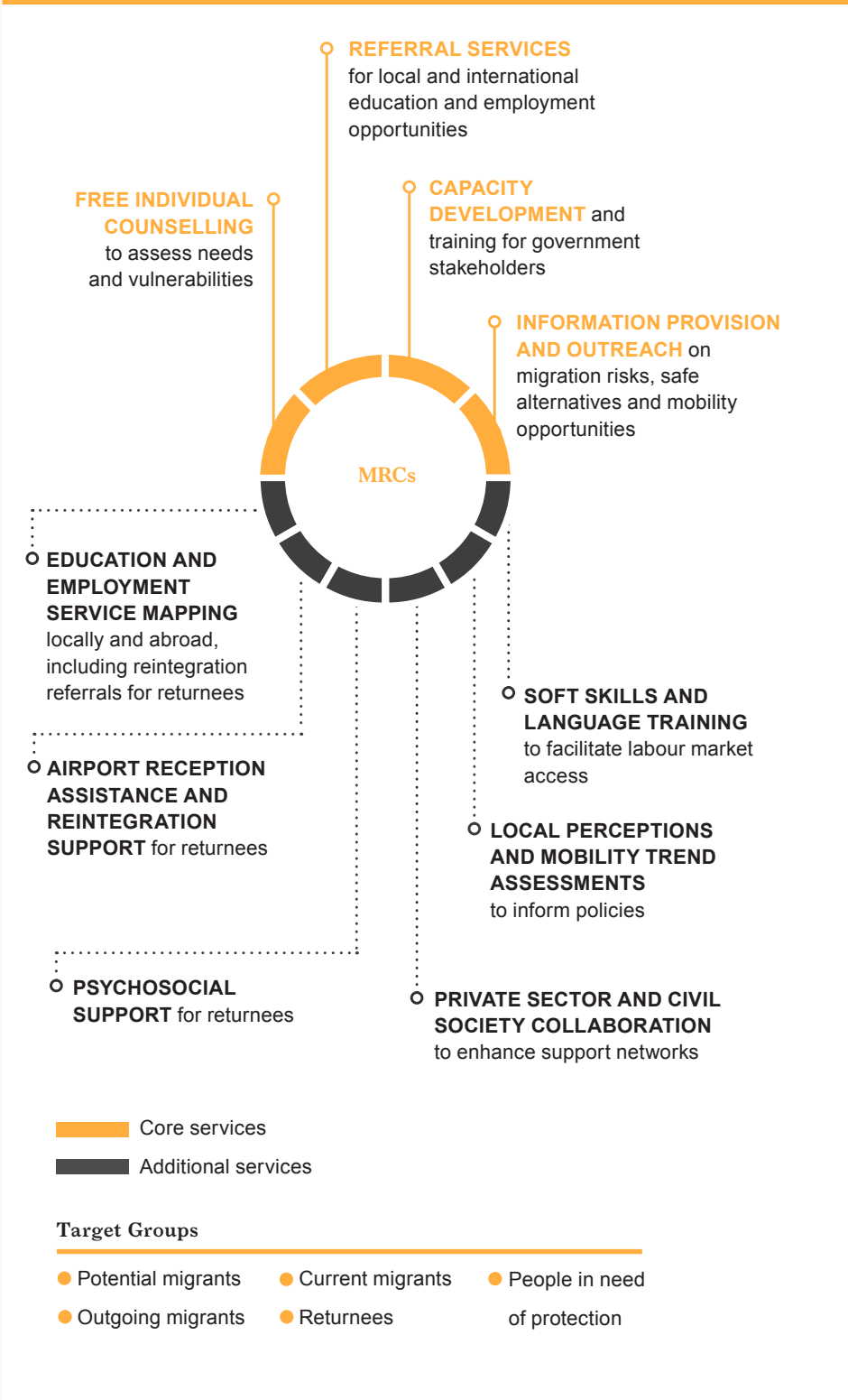### THE UNIQUE VALUE OF MRCs

ICMPD's MRCs are co-implemented and co-managed with government institutions, ensuring alignment with national policies and priorities and strengthening national capacities, local ownership and sustainable approaches to migration management. Each MRC adopts an approach that is carefully tailored to the local context, allowing it to adapt, adjust and respond to evolving migration challenges. Central to

the MRC approach is institution-building and government-to-government partnership building. Close collaboration with other stakeholders, including local civil society and the private sector in countries of origin and destination, helps to provide a robust range of services.

The wide range of methodologies developed and tested over the last nine years make MRCs efficient and effective. Almost one million migrants have received free face-to-face counselling from MRCs since 2016, and nearly 140 million people have been reached through their campaigns. Regular impact assessments of their work allow MRCs to evaluate their progress and results.

These impact assessments consistently demonstrate that ICMPD's MRCs play a crucial role in addressing irregular migration. According to those who have accessed MRCs' services, these resource centres increase awareness of the risks of irregular migration and of safe migration or alternative options, decreasing the likelihood of migration through irregular channels and increasing the likelihood of migration through regular pathways. Significantly, the 2024 impact assessment of ICMPD's MRCs found that 93% of potential migrants reported a "high" or "very high" increase in their awareness of legal migration options, while 73% were

MRCs provide a range of activities

REFERRAL SERVICES for local and international education and employment opportunities

FREE INDIVIDUAL COUNSELLING to assess needs and vulnerabilities

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT and training for government stakeholders

INFORMATION PROVISION AND OUTREACH on migration risks, safe alternatives and mobility opportunities

MRCs

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICE MAPPING locally and abroad, including reintegration referrals for returnees

AIRPORT RECEPTION ASSISTANCE AND REINTEGRATION SUPPORT for returnees

PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT for returnees

SOFT SKILLS AND LANGUAGE TRAINING to facilitate labour market access

LOCAL PERCEPTIONS AND MOBILITY TREND ASSESSMENTS to inform policies

PRIVATE SECTOR AND CIVIL SOCIETY COLLABORATION to enhance support networks

— Core services

— Additional services

Target Groups

- Potential migrants
- Current migrants
- People in need of protection
- Outgoing migrants
- Returnees

MRCs have vast potential to contribute to the effective implementation of labour mobility schemes between Europe and targeted regions.

aware of available migration-related services at home or abroad following the MRCs' intervention.

MRCs play an important role in managing public expectations about labour migration opportunities by providing clear and realistic information. Indeed, MRCs are increasingly active in supporting targeted labour migration corridors. For example, outgoing migrants can access soft skills training and pre-departure counselling and briefings, meaning they are better prepared for their work abroad. In Pakistan, MRCs assist the Labour Market Research Cell in gathering critical data to inform policy decisions. They work with overseas employment actors to match skills, pre-screen eligible workers and provide targeted labour migration advice to countries of destination. MRCs also contribute to better regulation of recruitment agents and education consultants, strengthening

ethical practices and preventing exploitation. They are poised to play a greater role in pre-screening migrants, which can further streamline legal migration processes, benefiting countries of both origin and destination.

MRCs have vast potential to contribute further to the effective implementation of labour mobility schemes between Europe and targeted regions, building on the contributions already made to support the expansion of legal migration pathways from the Silk Routes region to other regions, such as the Gulf.

Another area in which MRCs are expanding their activities is the reintegration of returnees. For instance, ICMPD's MRCs in Iraq have partnered with the private sector to connect returnees with job referrals and training opportunities, in addition to facilitating the recognition of their new qualifications. Such services enable returnees to leverage their skills and experiences, benefitting both the individual and the labour market.

Finally, MRCs also play an important role in strengthening protection efforts for Afghan nationals in multiple countries. The virtual Afghanistan MRC promotes complementary pathways for education and employment by referring individuals to opportunities in Europe.

THE WAY FORWARD

In November 2024, the first regional exchange between MRCs took place in Istanbul, Türkiye, bringing together both MRCs and the partner governments in which they operate in order to learn and share best practices. This exchange underlined the willingness and interest among partner

Current MRC Network

MIGRATION IN NUMBERS

governments for MRCs to build a network that addresses shared challenges along migratory routes.

The development of the MRCs over the last decade has proven to be a valuable investment for the future and a model that can further support the objectives and ambitions of both EU and partner country governments in the area of migration cooperation. The model's success has already led to its replication by ICMPD's Ukrainian Consultation Centres in major EU receiving countries, which follow a similar approach by partnering with the consular services of countries of origin and applying lessons learned from MRCs. This replication, including the flexibility to adapt to local circumstances, highlights the model's potential for further expansion along other key migration routes.

Looking ahead, ICMPD's MRCs are posed to drive meaningful policy change. For migrants and local communities, they provide reliable information and support for safer, legal opportunities, steering individuals away from undertaking dangerous journeys. For returning migrants, reintegration support can make it possible to rebuild their livelihoods

in their communities. For policymakers, they provide insights into local dynamics and challenges, leading to more effective policies that align donor and host country interests. As they continue to evolve, they are well positioned to play an even more important role in migration cooperation in an increasingly complex world.

Expanding the MRC model to include additional migration dialogues and regions, namely the Prague, Khartoum and Rabat Processes, would provide an opportunity to build on this strong foundation and encompass more key routes. By aligning with broader migration frameworks and strengthening partnerships, MRCs can further enhance their impact–bridging gaps in migration policy and building trust within communities.
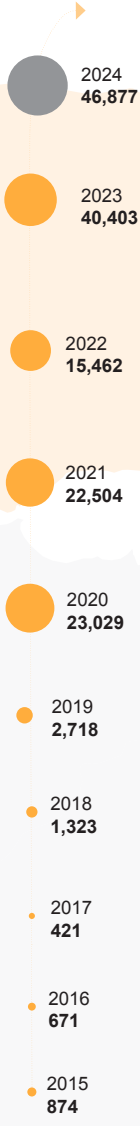
With strategic investment and sustained collaboration, MRCs can continue to serve as a model for effective migration governance and can expand their reach and benefits.

IRREGULAR BORDER CROSSINGS 2015–2024
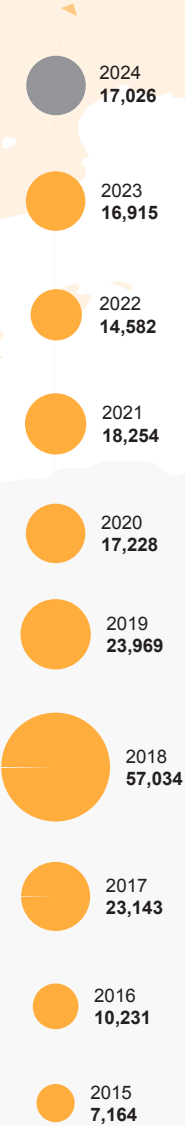
West Africa

Year	Value
2024	46,877
2023	40,403
2022	15,462
2021	22,504
2020	23,029
2019	2,718
2018	1,323
2017	421
2016	671
2015	874

Western Mediterranean

Year	Value
2024	17,026
2023	16,915
2022	14,582
2021	18,254
2020	17,228
2019	23,969
2018	57,034
2017	23,143
2016	10,231
2015	7,164

Central Mediterranean

Year	Value
2024	66,766
2023	157,479
2022	102,529
2021	65,362
2020	35,673
2019	14,003
2018	23,485
2017	118,962
2016	181,459
2015	153,946

Western Balkans

Year	Value
2024	21,520
2023	99,068
2022	145,600
2021	60,540
2020	26,918
2019	15,127
2018	5,869
2017	12,178
2016	130,261
2015	764,038

Eastern Land Border

Year	Value
2024	17,001
2023	5,608
2022	6,127
2021	12,884
2020	1,982
2019	2,591
2018	5,842
2017	7,645
2016	6,148
2015	10,769

Eastern Mediterranean

Year	Value
2024	69,436
2023	60,073
2022	42,831
2021	20,373
2020	20,283
2019	83,333
2018	56,561
2017	42,305
2016	182,277
2015	885,386

EUROPE: ARRIVALS AND LABOUR MIGRANTS

EU ARRIVALS OF REFUGEES IN THE LATEST THREE CRISES:

1990s BALKAN WARS

1991 — 1999

1 million

2015 AFGHANISTAN AND SYRIA CRISIS

2015 — 2016

2.6 million

2022 RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE

2022 — 6 months
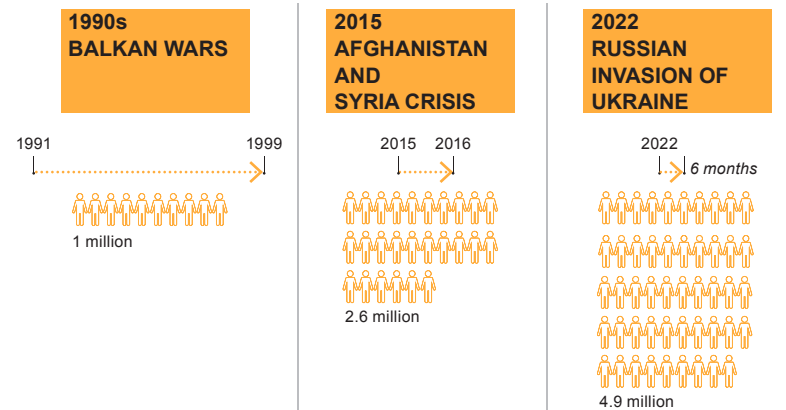
4.9 million

NON-EU27 LABOUR MIGRANTS IN THE EU (IN MILLION):

Year	Value
2014	6.8
2015	7.1
2016	7.3
2017	7.8
2018	8.2
2019	8.7
2020	8.6
2021	8.9
2022	10.1
2023	11.2
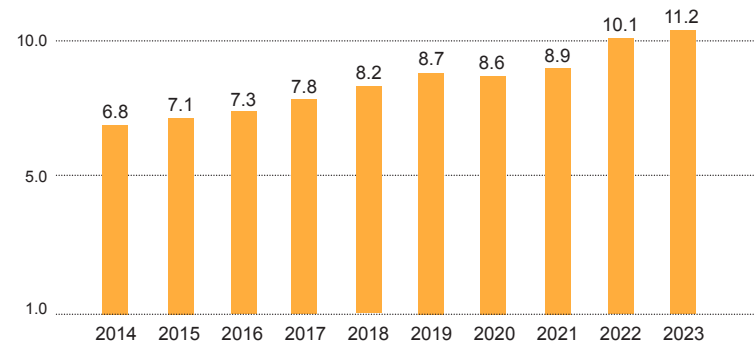
FOREIGN-TRAINED DOCTORS IN OECD COUNTRIES (IN PERCENT)
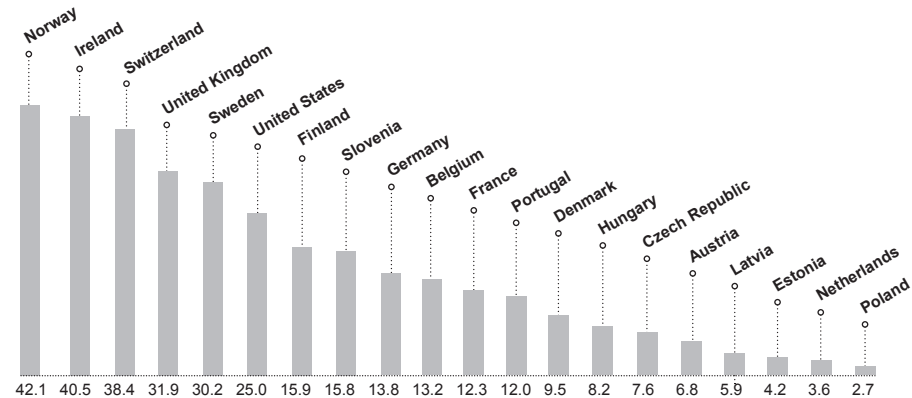
Country	Percent
Norway	42.1
Ireland	40.5
Switzerland	38.4
United Kingdom	31.9
Sweden	30.2
United States	25.0
Finland	15.9
Slovenia	15.8
Germany	13.8
Belgium	13.2
France	12.3
Portugal	12.0
Denmark	9.5
Hungary	8.2
Czech Republic	7.6
Austria	6.8
Latvia	5.9
Estonia	4.2
Netherlands	3.6
Poland	2.7

PROJECTS 2024

Policy, Research and Strategy

Measuring Irregular Migration and related Policies (MIrreM)

Finding Agreement in Return (FAiR)

Innovating to Enhance Dialogues on Migration Policies and Practices (INNOVATE)

Link4Skills

FIMAS longitudinal study on integration trajectories of refugees in Austria (FIMASreCOV and FIMAS Ukraine)

Novel Strategies to Fight Child Sexual Abuse and Human Trafficking Crimes and Protect their Victims (HEROES)

Labour market integration of displaced women from Ukraine with temporary residence prospects (INTAKE)

Social realities in highly diverse urban spaces (LOCALIZE)

Western Balkans and Türkiye

Support to the Western Balkans on establishing a return mechanism for the targeted operationalisation of returns of third-country nationals (WBMR)

AMIF Empower

IBM Albania II

AFIS Bosnia & Herzegovina

WBRM 2

Enhancement of Entrepreneurship Capacities for Sustainable Socio-Economic Integration (ENHANCER)

Supporting the Implementation and Further Strengthening of Türkiye's National Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration System – Capacity building of the N-AVRR national stakeholders (NAVRR Pillar 2)

Drafting of a National IBM Strategy and Updating of the National Action Plan to Implement Türkiye's IBM Strategy

Supporting the Institutional Capacity of the National Coordination and Joint Risk Analysis Centre (NACORAC)

4P-Actions Against Trafficking in Human Beings (P-ACT)

Enforcement of Migration Governance and Partnership through a Holistic Methodology (EMPATHY, formerly COMPAS)

Enhancing the Border Management Capacity of the Presidency of Migration Management (ENGAGE)

European Union Scholarships (BEURs)

Strengthening National Coordination and Cooperation Mechanisms in the Field of Border Management (SYNCRON)

Supporting the Development of Return Counselling Capacities in Türkiye – PHASE II (RECONNECT II)

Enforcing Capacities for Application of Alternative Measures to Detention in Türkiye (ENACT)

Supporting Türkiye's Efforts to Strengthen Border Management at the Eastern and South Eastern Land Borders (SAFE, formerly SENSE)

Enhancement of Entrepreneurship Capacities for Further Sustainable Socio-Economic Integration (ENHANCER PRO)

Strengthening Capacities to Prevent Irregular Migration Through Introduction of New Measures and Reinforcement of a Human Rights Sensitive Approach (INNOVATIVE)

Boosting Turkish National Police (TNP)'s Capacity in Detection of Forged Travel Documents at the Border Gates (TNP FORGERY)

Empowering the Border Management Capacity of the Presidency of Migration Management (EMPOWER)

Fostering Integrated Migration Management Capacity of the Presidency of Migration Management (PMM) through Operational and Technical Support (INTERLINK)

Strengthening the Operational Capacity for Conducting Border Control Procedures at Prioritised International Border Crossing Points (Border Gates)

Eastern Europe & Central Asia (EECA)

Mobility Partnership Facility III – Prague Process (MPF III – PP DATA)

Entrepreneurial Mobility Link (EMLINK)

EC for Increasing Migrants' Potential to Act for the Development of Armenia (EC Impact for Armenia)

Border Management in Central Asia – Phase 10 (BOMCA)

Support Programme for the State Migration Service and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Consular Offices abroad) to continuously protect and provide state services and assistance to the citizens of Ukraine (RRR – MFA/SMS – CZ)

EU Support for Strengthening IBM in Ukraine – Resilience (EU4IBM-Resilience)

Migration Partnership Facility IV – PP DATA

Strengthening Development Impact of Migration in Georgia – Phase 2 (STREAMinG 2)

Support to the Reorganisation of the Migration and Citizenship Service (E-Mics 2)

Support to the Complex Improvement of Migration and Border Management in Moldova (SCOP), Activity 3.1: Strengthening Border Police Operational Capacities for Border Security–Phase II

Comprehensive Resilience Support for Displaced Persons from Ukraine (CORE Ukraine)

Silk Routes

Capacity-building project aimed at implementing sustainable, rights-based border management practices in Iraq and Pakistan towards increasing border management and security and reducing irregular migration (RBM Silk Routes)

MPF contribution to the Budapest Process (MPF BP)

Migration information and awareness raising on the risks of irregular migration in Iraq (MIRAMI)

Awareness Raising and Information Campaigns on the Risks of Irregular Migration in Pakistan (PARIM 2)

Improving Migration Management and Migrant Protection in Selected Silk Routes and Central Asian Countries (PROTECT – IMM2)

Capacity building for long-term reintegration of returnees to Iraq (CAIR 2)

EU–India CAMM Support Project Phase 2 (India CAMM 2)

MAARC previously: Migrant Resource Centre (MRC) – Erbil 2023–2024

UNICEF Pakistan, Children on the Move

Sweden–Iraq Cooperation on Migration Governance (SI-COM)

Budapest Process 2025

Sustainable reintegration of returnees and improved migration management in Pakistan (Pakistan Return & Reintegration)

MRC PAK Australia

CAIR 3

MRC Sri Lanka

AMIF Finland NORAQ

SI-COM MoJ 2025 contribution

UK Comm Campaign India

Pakistan Fake Job Adverts and Cyber Crime

Mediterranean

Border Management Programme for the Maghreb Region (BMP Maghreb)

Integrated Border Management in Jordan (IBM Jordan)

Training Institute on Migration Capacity Partnership for the Mediterranean–II (MCP Med TI DK–II)

Border Management Programme for the Maghreb Region – Tunisia component, Phase II (BMP Maghreb TUN II)

Netherlands Assistance to Lebanese Border Agencies Lebanon (IBM) – Phase V

33

Strengthening the Tunisian Coast Guard Training Pillar (BMT TUN)

EU Training Support to Libya's Border Security and Management Institutions (BMT LY)

Completion of the integrated coastal surveillance system (BMP Maghreb TUN III)

Coordination of the 7th International Border Management Conference (IBM C7)

Support to Cross-Border Cooperation and Integrated Border Management in North Africa (CBC IBM NA)

IBM LEB EU Phase 4 follow-up

DK RPMG (TI, TUN)

DK CAPACITY Programme (ALG, LEB, JOR)

Euromed Migration (next phase)

Pan-Africa

Support to Africa–EU Migration and Mobility Dialogue II (MMD II)

Strengthening the National Observatory capacity to tackle trafficking in persons in Cabo Verde (OBSERVE-CV)

School Anti-Trafficking Education and Advocacy Project (STEAP)

Danish Support to ECOWAS – Demand-Driven Facility (SMiWA)

Support to Free Movement of Persons and Migration in West Africa (FMMII)

Border Management Cote d'Ivoire–Phase 2 (BMCI 2)

Strengthening capacities on border management and prevention of trafficking in human beings in Côte d'Ivoire (BMTHB CI)

Youth Empowerment and Reintegration Project (YERP)

Enhance Ghanaian migrant workers' recruitment governance and capacity to prevent TIP for forced labour (SAFE PASS GHANA)

Regional Referral Mechanisms

Strengthening Border Security– Phase II

Austria–Ghana Skills Partnership

POLICY AND RESEARCH

Global/ Interregional Initiatives

Mobility Partnership Facility – Phase III (AMIF)

Return and Reintegration Facility (RRF-FSO)

Return and Reintegration Facility (RRF-Brussels)

Return and Reintegration Facility (RRF-Abuja)

Return and Reintegration Facility (RRF-Yerevan)

Migration Partnership Facility (MPF IV – AMIF)

Global EU Diaspora Facility (EUDiF) – Phase II

J&V Migration Partnership Programme (J&V MPP)

Technical Assistance Facility (TAF) for Migration and Forced Displacement

DK CAPACITY Programme

CALLS FOR SOLUTIONS REVERBERATE IN THE PUBLIC DEBATE

The adoption of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum marked a milestone, while European elections determined the bloc's leadership and course of migration policy for the next five-year mandate. Calls for effective solutions to irregular migration, overstretched asylum systems and labour shortages continue to resonate in public debate, and to polarise discourse.

Migration dynamics are complex and influenced by wider regional and global geopolitical, economic and technological developments, as well as domestic political realities.

KEY ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

Irregular arrivals, which bring security concerns, particularly following the instrumentalisation of migrants by foreign powers at the EU eastern border. It is crucial to both facilitate movement and implement safeguards against unauthorised entry in order to protect the integrity of the EU's economy, migration system and borders. It is also important to preempt border pressures by informing and supporting migrants about alternatives to irregular migration, while intensifying efforts to combat trafficking and smuggling.

The global protection regime, which faces persistent challenges. Countries of first asylum are struggling as displacement rises. Meanwhile, people are using the EU asylum system as an entry point, even though they may not qualify, making EU reception, asylum and return procedures lengthy, overstretched and costly. Traditional responses have consistently fallen short, highlighting the need to develop a longer-term vision that promotes protection via safe and regular pathways rather than spontaneous arrival.

The future of individuals under temporary protection in Europe, for whom the future remains highly uncertain. A considerable and growing proportion wish to stay as war continues, and an EU-wide, long-term plan for exiting temporary protection cannot be postponed – a plan that must also take Ukraine's interests into account.

Integration policies and services in the face of a growing number of migrants from non-EU countries, including people fleeing Ukraine. Positive integration outcomes in employment and education among Ukrainian refugees highlight the value of investing in timely support. At the same time, overall outcomes for non-EU nationals in areas such as employment and social inclusion often lag behind those of EU nationals, highlighting disparities across different populations.

Labour migration policies in the light of workforce shortages and demographic shifts that point to the growing importance of workers from non-EU countries in European economies. Policies remain insufficiently adapted to secure needed workers, while employers face significant barriers to international recruitment. And while immediate labour shortages dominate the headlines, Europe must not lose sight of future skills needs, gaps which are also faced by many countries of origin.

The return of foreign nationals who do not meet the legal conditions for stay, which remains fundamental to migration policy and the credibility of governments in managing migration. There is room for improvement, and political pressure to improve performance on return will further increase with the Pact's new border procedure. At the same time, as conflict dynamics continue to evolve in Syria and Ukraine, many refugees will wish to return home once conditions allow.

Assessing the Landscape

ICMPD's Policy Unit undertook a range of activities to assess the evolving landscape and priorities. Through research and internal and external discussions, it worked in 2024 to pinpoint key issues, identify ongoing and future challenges, and develop targeted recommendations in different areas of migration policy. Based on this analysis, the Policy Unit will put forward proposals to improve migration governance in areas such as temporary protection, labour migration and reintegration.

Main Priority Areas for EU Action in the Medium Term

Priority Area	Percentage
Security and Defence	33%
Migration	29%
Economy	28%
Climate and the Environment	28%
Health	27%

Source: Eurobarometer 102, autumn 2024.

THE PLURALITY OF POLICIES ADDRESSING IRREGULAR MIGRATION

Amid social, demographic and economic shifts, countries' policies on irregular migration are shaped by a wide range of factors. These include changing public attitudes and political agendas, humanitarian concerns, economic pressures, legal constraints, the urgency of the situation and national capacities.

Policy Responses to the Presence of Irregular Migrants

Acceptance
- GRANT CITIZENSHIP
- GRANT SECURE STATUS
- GRANT CONDITIONAL STATUS

Tolerance
- ACCEPT "DE FACTO" PRESENCE
- POLICY INACTION

Rejection
- RIGHTS RESTRICTIONS & SANCTIONS
- RETURN & RETURN PROCEDURES

In light of recent political changes, the need to examine irregular migration policies is as pressing as ever. In response to this need, ICMPD, as part of the EU-funded research consortium Measuring Irregular Migration (MIrreM), has analysed irregular migration policies across 20 countries in Europe, North America and North Africa.

Despite the wide range of national contexts and policies, seven main types of policy responses to the presence of irregular migrants were identified. While regularisation or expulsion are often perceived as the primary tools, the ICMPD Research Unit's analysis revealed a more complex and nuanced reality. In fact, responses range from accepting irregular migrants by granting various forms of residence permits to tolerating their presence or rejecting them through policies that restrict their rights or promote their return. While some may consider these approaches to irregular migration as mutually exclusive, States usually employ several different responses across this spectrum simultaneously.

Furthermore, key national contextual factors have shaped the development and evolution of irregular migration policies: election-driven priorities, labour market needs and triggering events have been found to significantly influence policy approaches both at the national and the European level.

FACTORS SHAPING MIGRATION POLICIES

While irregular migration has become a prominent issue in electoral politics, labour market needs and other priorities encourage some countries to adopt less restrictive approaches to irregular migration or to pursue dual policy objectives depending on the location – such as stricter measures at the border versus more lenient approaches inside the country.

Major "triggering events" such as large-scale arrivals, the COVID-19 pandemic, economic crises and criminal acts have been significant in changing policy approaches both at the national and the European level.

Likewise, actors such as the media, civil society, employers and trade unions, political parties, the judiciary, local and provincial governments and even international entities such as the EU all contribute to shaping the direction of policies and public narratives on irregular migration. These actors often rely on statistical data and evidence to inform their policymaking and advocacy, although the incomplete nature of data on irregular migrant populations poses challenges. Therefore, the research consortium has also assessed existing data on irregular migration and is testing novel methods for more accurate estimation.

To support policymakers and other data users, ICMPD's Research Unit, in collaboration with the Policy Unit and other consortium partners, has provided guidance on key limitations and opportunities that should be considered when drawing on existing and forthcoming data on irregular migration in policy development.

Ultimately, these findings aim to inform policymaking in the area of irregular migration, while also providing a more nuanced understanding of policymaking itself.

Increased Collaboration

ICMPD is part of the European H-Europe consortium INNOVATE, which is working to advance collaboration between migration research and policy by testing new models in a number of pilots. Findings inform a Co-Lab, a virtual platform featuring a research exchange, an engagement hub and a training facility. Policy-makers, practitioners and researchers are invited to participate in the Co-Lab. By fostering knowledge sharing and engagement, the Co-Lab helps policymakers, practitioners and researchers co-create solutions to pressing migration issues, aligning with the project's mission to bridge research and policy.

THEMATIC EXPERTISE

33

EXTENSIVE EFFORTS AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

In 2024, against the backdrop of the ongoing restructuring of ICMPD's thematic expertise, the Anti-Trafficking Expert Team took on a critical role by building on the foundation of the previous Anti-Trafficking Programme. The team aimed to further strengthen ICMPD's efforts against human trafficking by continuing its critical work on capacity building, technical assistance, policy development, research and cooperation.

Building Blocks of ICMPD's Anti-Trafficking Expertise

UNDERSTAND AND RAISE AWARENESS OF THB

FORMULATE AND DELIVER COHERENT NATIONAL AND REGIONAL ANTI-TRAFFICKING RESPONSES

BUILD STRONG BILATERAL, REGIONAL AND TRANSNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS

ADHERE TO HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED, VICTIM-CENTRED AND TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACHES

As one of ICMPD's strongest areas of expertise, the anti-trafficking expert team continued its work in support of anti-trafficking efforts in the West Africa region and in strategic cooperation with the ECOWAS Commission. Central to these efforts was the drafting of the Annual Synthesis Report 2023 on the progress achieved by Member States in implementing the ECOWAS Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons (2018–2027). Furthermore, as part of a regional project led by Expertise France, the team developed an Advocacy Plan for the Revival of the Multilateral Agreement on Regional Cooperation to Combat Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children in West and Central Africa.

The ongoing support for the Network of Anti-Trafficking Coordinators in South-East Europe ensured the annual meeting of the network on 7 June 2024 in Zagreb, Croatia, and laid the foundations for the development of the network's next strategy paper for 2025–2029.

In addition, the anti-trafficking expert team facilitates bilateral exchanges on anti-trafficking practices between Kazakhstan and Austria (April 2024, BOMCA 10 Programme), Türkiye and the Netherlands, and Türkiye and Kyrgyzstan, by supporting Türkiye's Country Representation and assisting in the organisation of two study visits (to take place in 2025, P-ACT project).

IMPLEMENTING CAPACITY-BUILDING INITIATIVES

The team conducted numerous training sessions across the following key thematic areas:
• Victim protection: training programme focusing on assessing risks to individuals and shelters, identifying vulnerabilities to human trafficking, and accessing the needs and planning required for victims of human trafficking within shelter management, 23 May 2024, Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire.
• Human trafficking and cybercrime: conducting or presenting at the following events: two workshops for law enforcement officers, one train-the-trainer workshop for senior law enforcement

trainers and two webinars conducted in Kazakhstan – March, April, May and November 2024 (BOMCA 10 Programme).
• Awareness raising and prevention of human trafficking: training on combating human trafficking and on victim support for local self-government bodies and regional departments of ministries – 9–10 July 2024, Osh, Kyrgyzstan (BOMCA 10 Programme).

The team also developed the first draft of country-specific indicators for the identification of victims of human trafficking in Cabo Verde, which will become part of the official national anti-trafficking policy and response.

CONTRIBUTING TO THE INTERNATIONAL AGENDA

The anti-trafficking expert team continued its efforts to work with the biggest international anti-trafficking platforms, participating in the meetings of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons (ICAT) and Alliance

New Publications

In collaboration with colleagues from the ICMPD PRS Directorate, the anti-trafficking expert team developed two new publications. These were launched in 2024:
• Manual for Early Identification of Potential Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings, Child Sexual Abuse and Child Sexual Exploitation. This aims to expand the knowledge and skills of professionals to proactively use practical tools and techniques to identify victims in their daily work.
• Guardianship Solutions and Services for Unaccompanied and Separated Children under Temporary Protection in the EU, with a special focus on the case of Ukrainian children. This aims to support the Polish migration and asylum management systems in addressing the needs of vulnerable migrants.

8.7, the OSCE Alliance Conference against Trafficking in Persons, the Regional Expert Group Meeting on the Nexus between Human Trafficking and Migration Flows (with a Focus on Migrant Smuggling in South-Eastern Europe), etc. The team responded to calls for input from the UN Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, and the OHCHR on Existing and Emerging Sexually Exploitative Practices against Children in the Digital Environment.

THE IMPORTANCE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING AND MONITORING

The effectiveness of border agencies is often hampered by a lack of strategic, long-term and coherent planning and a clear definition of objectives resulting in ad hoc activities rather than addressing the root causes of problems in effective border management. This requires an integrated approach that addresses long-term sustainable objectives.

ICMPD considers strategic planning as one of the key steps towards a modern, effective and sustainable border management model. Thus, in many cases this activity plays a prominent role in various border management projects across the regions.

Border management is a vital aspect of every nation's security, economic stability and sociopolitical development. It involves regulating the movement of people, goods and services across national borders, ensuring national security, facilitating trade, and safeguarding the human rights of citizens and travellers.

However, border management is not just a reactive process; it requires careful and long-term strategic planning to be effective. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are essential components of strategic planning that ensure border management policies and initiatives achieve the desired goals. Strategic planning in border management refers to the long-term, deliberate process of setting objectives, determining policies and creating systems to manage borders effectively. The aim is to develop an integrated approach that balances security concerns with facilitating legitimate trade, tourism, and other forms of cross-border interaction that benefit both the national and international communities.

BRIDGING THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE

Strategic planning requires a comprehensive understanding of both immediate and future border issues and the resources needed to address them. It involves identifying key challenges such as irregular migration, trafficking, terrorism and smuggling, and designing integrated responses that incorporate security, economic, and social considerations.

The strategic planning cycle starts with a thorough assessment of the current challenges facing border security. This could involve reviewing security threats (e.g. terrorism, organised crime), economic impacts (e.g. trade flows) and the social dynamics of border regions (e.g. local communities' interactions with neighbouring countries). The next steps involve setting long-term goals and objectives, ensuring realistic and feasible resource allocation, and defining regional

Long-Term Thinking

Strategic planning in border management is a comprehensive, long-term approach to balancing security, trade, social and community development. By setting clear objectives and deploying resources effectively, countries can manage their borders in ways that promote security and prosperity. However, even the most well-designed strategies can face challenges that emerge over time.
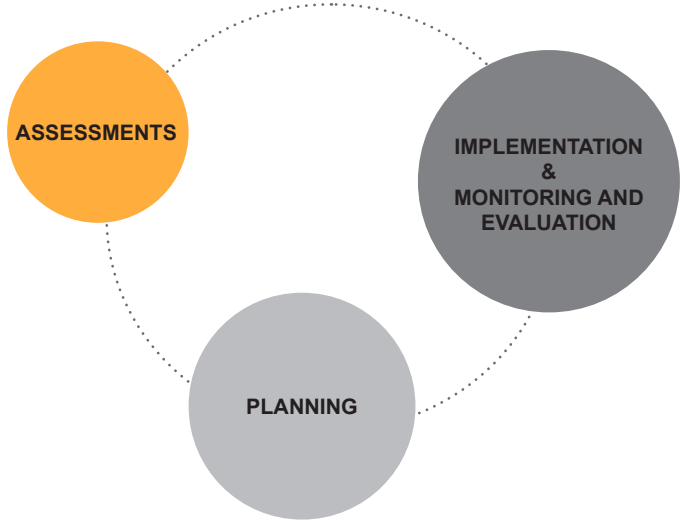
and international cooperations, taking into account that borders are not isolated but are often interconnected.

Two additional aspects are important: first, policy development and implementation. Policies should be developed to address the various elements of border management, from security measures to facilitating the movement of people and goods. Effective policy implementation requires a coordinated effort between different government agencies, such as border guards, police, customs, immigration, defence and foreign affairs. The second aspect is ensuring flexibility and adaptability. Border management is not static. Strategic plans must be flexible in order to adapt to changing political, economic and technological environments. New threats (e.g. cyber threats, pandemics) or opportunities (e.g. shifts in global trade patterns) may require adjustments to border policies and practices.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Strategic planning needs to include two critical components: monitoring involves the continuous collection and analysis of data to assess the progress of border management initiatives in real time. And evaluation involves periodic assessments to determine whether the objectives and goals of border management strategies are being achieved.

Tracking the performance process along with tracking key indicators helps authorities understand whether their strategies are working as intended or if adjustments are needed. Monitoring and evaluation also play a crucial role in ensuring security and compliance (early detection and early warning systems), optimising resources and adjusting operational practices. This helps border agencies to identify inefficiencies in border operations. If certain procedures or technologies are ineffective, quick adjustments can be made to improve operational efficiency.

Strategic planning in border management is a comprehensive, long-term approach to balancing security, trade, social and community development. By setting clear objectives and deploying resources effectively, countries can manage their borders in ways that promote security and prosperity. However, even the most well-designed strategies can face challenges that emerge over time. This is where monitoring and evaluation (M&E) become indispensable. Through continuous monitoring and periodic evaluation, border management strategies can be adapted to changing conditions, ensuring that borders remain secure, efficient and conducive to economic growth. Strategic planning and robust M&E systems go hand in hand to promote effective border management that meets both present and future needs.

Key Phases in Border Management Strategic Planning

MAPPING AND SECURING TALENT

The ongoing demographic shift is posing challenges for the European labour market. Several sectors are struggling to find and attract people with the right skills. Labour migration can help to fill the gaps and increase European competitiveness.

An interactive web tool visualises labour migration pathways

Labour shortages at all skill levels are expected to worsen across the EU, primarily due to the ageing and shrinking population. Sectors such as construction, engineering, healthcare, and ICT are particularly impacted, with small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which represent 99.8% of EU businesses, reporting difficulties in maintaining competitiveness and adopting digital technologies because of these shortages. Labour migration is one of several measures aimed at meeting labour needs, driving growth, and sustaining European welfare systems.

LABOUR MIGRATION PATHWAYS

To provide an overview of the current landscape, a joint mapping by ICMPD and the European Centre for Development Policy Management across all 27 EU Member States identified nearly 300 labour migration pathways. The research is accompanied by an interactive tool on the Migration Partnership Facility (MPF) website, designed to help

Related Publications

• "Re-thinking approaches to labour migration. Potential and gaps in EU Member States' Migration Infrastructures" maps labour market needs and analyses the national migration systems of all 27 EU Member States between late 2023 and early 2024. A separate horizontal report highlighting trends, similarities, and differences across the EU labour migration landscape offers a broader perspective on policies and practices.

• "Cultivating talent: Exploring effective talent attraction and retention practices in and beyond the EU" provides a comparative snapshot and offers 10 recommendations for policymakers.

• "Expanding the possibilities of working holidays" explores the potential benefits of expanding youth mobility schemes and different policy options.
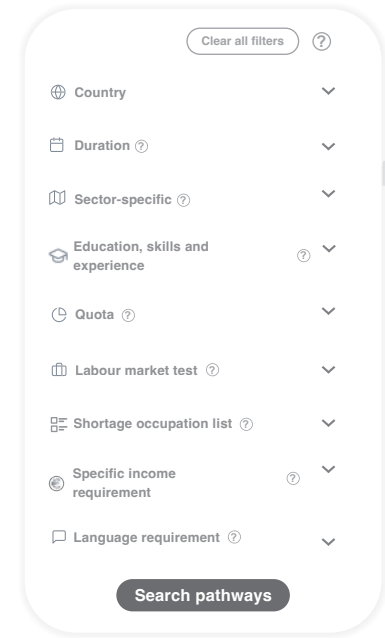
users navigate the complex criteria for each pathway.

ICMPD also focused on the mobility of young people from outside the EU and published a policy paper exploring the potential of expanding mobility schemes for young adults, including working holidays, internships and language learning combined with work. These schemes could support cultural exchange, local labour needs, and/or development goals, but remain limited in scope compared to countries such as Australia, Canada, and the United States.

SECURING TALENT

Several EU Member States, including Denmark, Estonia and Finland, have implemented national strategies to attract foreign talent to support economic growth. These strategies address factors beyond migration policies, such as career opportunities, quality of life, inclusivity and family-friendliness, which influence talent attraction and retention. Moreover, a comprehensive, strategic approach involving national, local and regional actors is essential. The "Cultivating Talent" paper provides policy recommendations for the EU and its Member States to improve their measures.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

While the immediate focus is on addressing labour shortages, Europe must also plan for future skills needs. Both EU Member States and many countries of origin continue to face skills gaps. Skills mobility partnerships, such as Talent Partnerships, which promote skills development and mutual benefits for both sending and receiving countries, are gaining traction.

Although these initiatives remain small-scale, they have the potential to create livelihood opportunities and enrich the global talent pool. ICMPD is a partner in the Link4Skills Horizon Europe research project, which examines migration skill corridors and ways to tackle skills shortages. In 2025, ICMPD will analyse different ways of responding to skills shortages, including various types of government partnerships.

FOSTERING OWNERSHIP AND LOCAL EMBEDDEDNESS FOR SUSTAINABLE REINTEGRATION

More than ever, return and reintegration are at the centre of attention of migration policymakers and practitioners. Stakeholders increasingly agree that reintegration itself is a key element of return migration and cooperation with partner countries. Approaches to reintegration and how to support returning migrants still differ between countries, programmes and contexts, but have evolved in recent years.

- NATIONAL REINTEGRATION POLICIES AND STRATEGIES
- CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT
- NATIONAL REFERRAL MECHANISMS
- REINTEGRATION COUNSELLING, CASE MANAGEMENT AND TAILORED SUPPORT FOR RETURNEES
- PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS
- MONITORING, EVALUATION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEARNING

FOSTERING LOCAL OWNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE REINTEGRATION

There is a common understanding that reintegration is a complex and non-linear process that does not take place in a vacuum. It is affected by a number of factors at the structural, community and individual levels, which may be similar to those that pushed migrants to leave in the first place. For sustainable reintegration to happen, various factors affecting the economic, social and psychosocial dimensions of reintegration need to be addressed in a holistic and development-oriented manner.

In 2024, ICMPD was increasingly committed to supporting the sustainable reintegration of returnees in a holistic way. Not only does it focus on individuals by addressing their needs and situations of vulnerability, but it also aims to address factors hindering reintegration at the structural and community levels.
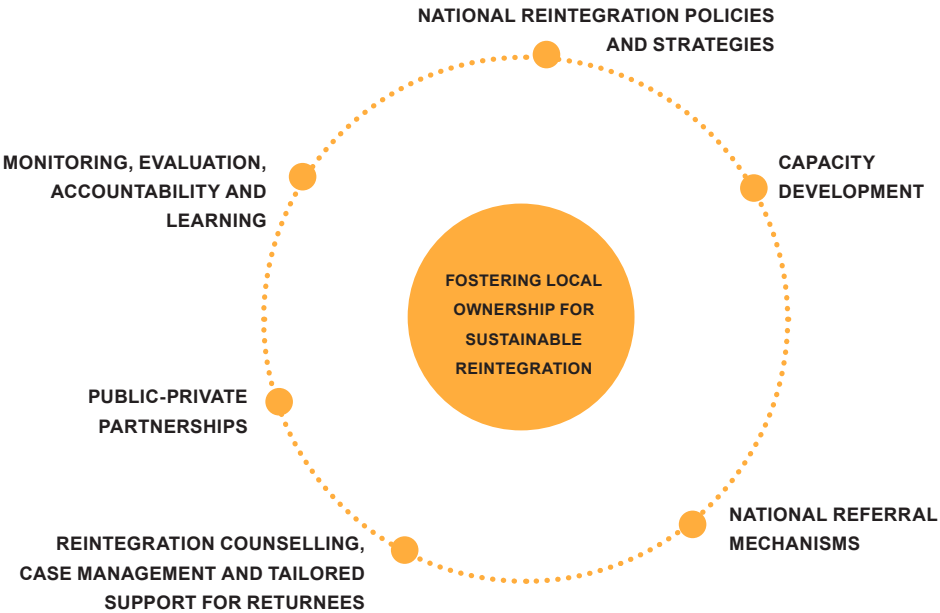
Sustainable Reintegration

ICMPD supports the capacities and expertise of governmental and non-governmental stakeholders in various countries (Iraq, Armenia, Türkiye, Pakistan, Prague Process countries, etc.) in the field of sustainable reintegration, through training and train-the-trainers activities based on ICMPD's standardised reintegration training curriculum accredited by the Malta Further & Higher Education Authority. This course, targeting both migration practitioners (e.g. reintegration counsellors/case managers) and migration policymakers and programme professionals, allows participants to receive two European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) credits.

CONTEXT AND COLLABORATION MATTER

In order to address these complexities, reintegration policies and programmes need to be context-sensitive and require cooperation at all stages and levels, both in their design and implementation.

To enhance the range and quality of return and reintegration assistance available to migrants, it is essential to establish partnerships and promote cooperation among a variety of actors at the international, regional, national, and subnational levels. Dialogue and partnerships are not only paramount to avoid the duplication of efforts and ensure the sustainability of reintegration processes. They also help to understand and take into account the specific perspectives and interests of countries of origin.

AN INCLUSIVE APPROACH

ICMPD's inclusive and participatory approach aims to foster ownership and local embeddedness, anchoring reintegration support within existing public institutions and programmes and developing capacities to enhance the availability and accessibility of services. Such an approach helps to ensure the long-term sustainability of reintegration programmes and pave the way for an "exit" strategy or a seamless handover to relevant entities in the country of origin.

In Iraq for instance, ICMPD's work on reintegration has been integrated into a single framework, the Nordic Cooperation on Return and Reintegration in Iraq (NORAQ), through which projects support government and NGO partners to enhance their migration governance, in particular to improve reintegration support for returnees. This ensures complementarity and sustainability, and presents a unified approach towards supporting the government.

WEST
AFRICA
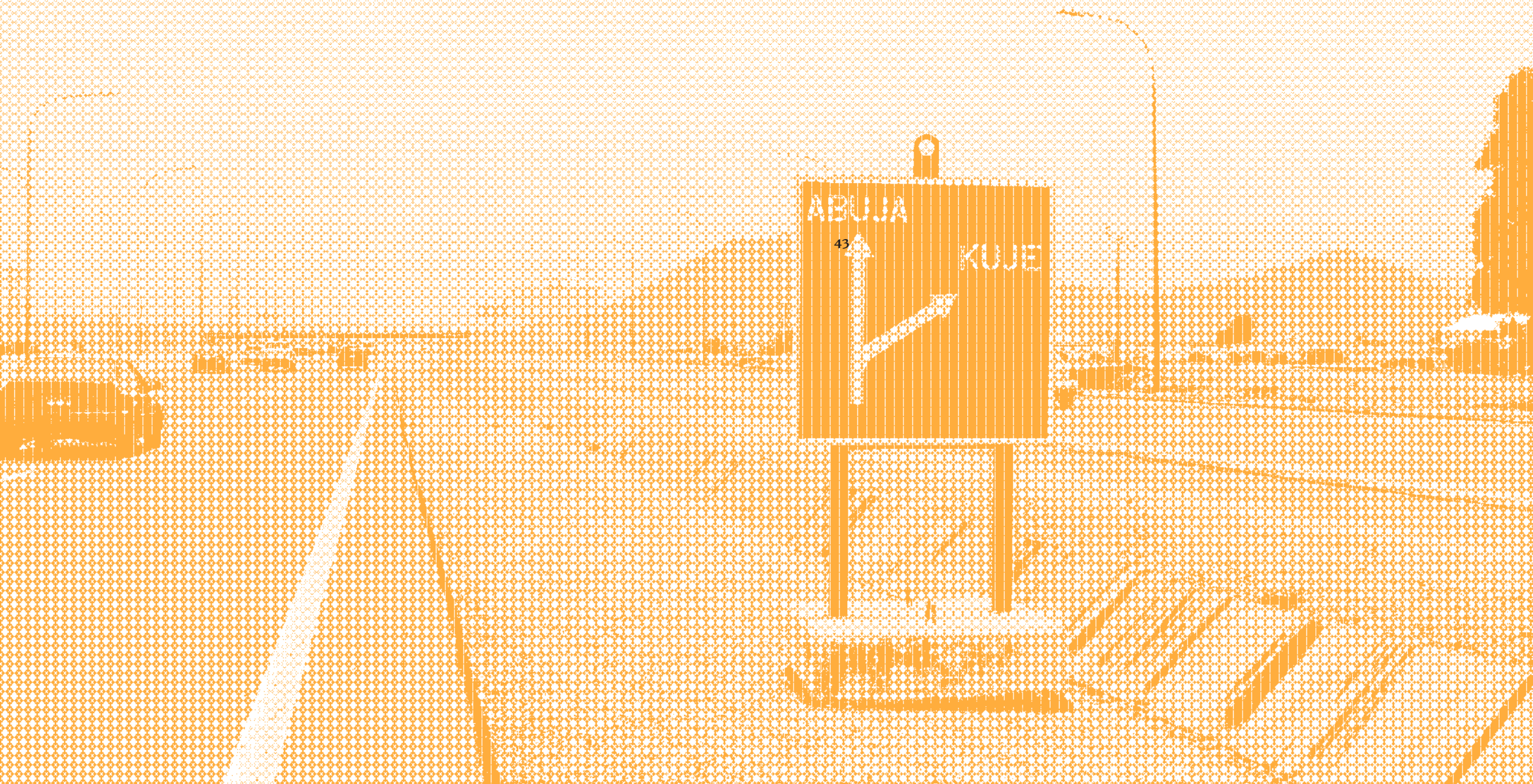
ADVANCING MIGRATION AND SECURITY

In 2024, ICMPD spearheaded significant advancements in migration governance, border security and human mobility across West Africa. Initiatives in Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and the wider region have introduced sustainable solutions that are reshaping migration policy and practice.

As migration dynamics evolve, national institutions face new challenges in managing mobility, security, and cross-border cooperation throughout the region. ICMPD's interventions not only contribute to national security and institutional resilience but also reinforce ICMPD West Africa's role as a regional leader in migration governance. The following sections provide an in-depth look at these initiatives.

THE MoNIS PROJECT CONCLUDES

In December 2024, the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) achieved a major milestone with the successful completion of the MoNIS project. Implemented by ICMPD in partnership with the Government of Denmark, MoNIS has redefined institutional efficiency, inclusivity, and digital innovation within the NIS, setting a new standard for immigration management in Nigeria.

The MoNIS project was launched in December 2021 with the clear vision to transform the NIS through innovation, inclusivity and excellence. Focusing on key areas such as career progression, virtual learning and gender mainstreaming, the project aimed to modernise the NIS and set new standards in immigration management. Over the three years, MoNIS has implemented cutting-edge systems and inclusive policy reforms, such as the Career Progression Policy Framework and the Gender Policy, which have produced tangible results.

The introduction of a comprehensive Gender Policy ensures that recruitment, promotion and operational assignments are guided by principles of equity and inclusivity. Gender-responsive facilities and measures to address discriminatory practices create a more balanced and supportive workplace. With women currently representing 25% of the NIS workforce, the organisation is on track to meet – and exceed – the national benchmark of 35% gender representation, a significant milestone in building a more inclusive institution.
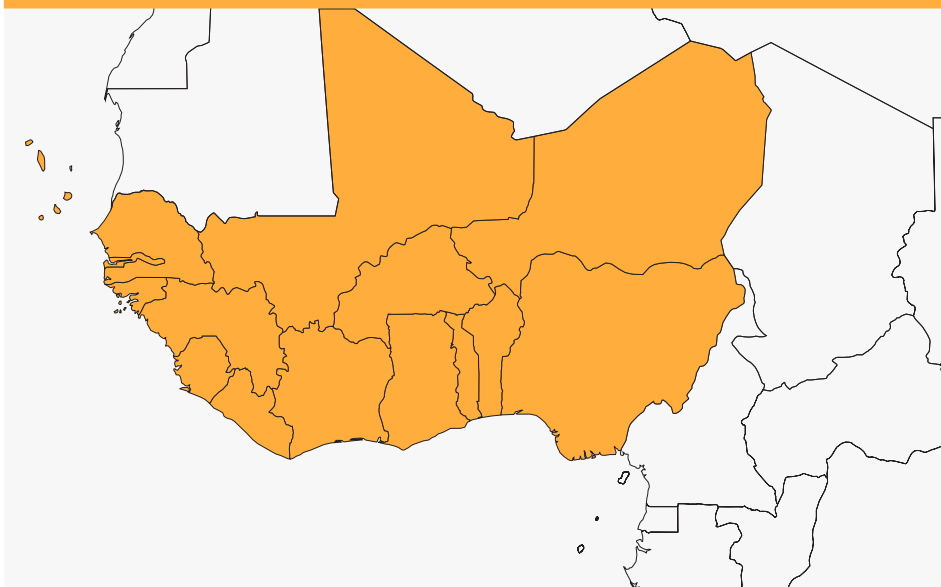
The reforms introduced by MoNIS are designed to have a long-term impact, with the Civil Defence, Corrections, Fire, and Immigration Boards playing a key role in their continued implementation. By expanding its digital ecosystem across all land, air, and sea borders, the NIS has set a standard in border management that is leading the way in Africa and worldwide.

CREATING LEGAL PATHWAYS FOR SKILLED MIGRATION

In 2024, the Nigerian TechPro4Europe project facilitated legal migration pathways by leveraging existing channels and forging new partnerships with destination countries. In line with its mission to support European businesses in meeting their international labour demands, the project adopted a multi-stakeholder approach to provide technical assistance to Eryk, a Denmark-based international technical service provider. This support enabled Eryk to identify and recruit skilled electrical engineers from Nigeria and Ghana.

The project utilised the talent partnership model, a proven and effective strategy for creating safe and structured migration

The West Africa Region

ICMPD'S WEST AFRICA REGION COMPRISES 15 COUNTRIES BETWEEN CABO VERDE AND NIGER.

opportunities for employment and skills development. By matching labour market needs with available talent, this approach fosters mutually beneficial mobility between the EU and partner countries. In the case of Nigeria's TechPro4Europe, it directly addressed youth unemployment in Nigeria while helping Denmark and Poland fill critical labour shortages in the technical sector.

The project worked closely with private sector stakeholders to design a labour mobility framework that benefits both migrants and destination countries. This multi-stakeholder approach ensured a structured vetting process, professional training and integration support for migrants, addressing critical labour shortages in Denmark and Poland.

STRENGTHENING CAPACITIES IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE

In 2024, ICMPD Côte d'Ivoire primarily focused on border management, with an emphasis on capacity building in document security, including training, equipment, and procedures. The evaluation of the

Key Achievements of TechPro4Europe

Through research, labour market assessment and project management, the Nigerian project achieved many successes in 2024. It proved the effectiveness of structured talent partnerships to drive ethical labour migration.
- 43 young West Africans were vetted and selected for a two-year paid apprenticeship programme in Denmark and Poland.
- 16 young people were successfully relocated to Europe for the apprenticeship programme, gaining European certifications and hands-on experience in projects across the EU under Polish and Danish employment standards. An additional 11 were granted the necessary travel documentation.
- Comprehensive pre-departure training was provided, covering language skills, cultural awareness, and workplace integration.
- Employer engagement was strengthened, improving hiring processes and workforce diversity.

Border Management in Côte d'Ivoire project highlighted its relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and potential for sustainability. It successfully addressed critical needs within the Ivorian border management system.

The most significant impact of the project was at the operational level, where border

PAN-AFRICA

Preventing Human Trafficking Starts In Schools

With 75% of detected trafficking victims in West Africa being children, the School Anti-Trafficking Education and Advocacy Project (STEAP) is taking a proactive approach by integrating anti-trafficking education into 250 Nigerian schools. This initiative empowers teachers, students, parents and the community at large. In 2024, STEAP advanced its mission to protect vulnerable school-aged children from human trafficking in Nigeria. Implemented by ICMPD and funded by the Government of the Netherlands, the four-year STEAP project focuses on raising awareness-building, strengthening capacity, and fostering multi-stakeholder collaboration, especially with the government and civil society organisations, to address the alarming rates of child trafficking in the country.

Targeting five high-risk States — Benue, Delta, Edo, Enugu and Ogun — the project has gone beyond traditional awareness efforts, embedding anti-trafficking education within Nigeria's school system. By integrating structured anti-trafficking education into the school curriculum and fostering community engagement, STEAP is creating sustainable systems to prevent exploitation. The project's efforts will continue in 2025, focusing on strengthening partnerships, monitoring impact and expanding outreach to more schools and vulnerable communities.

Ghana's Border Security

The Joint Mobile Team (JMT), a multi-agency team comprising the Immigration Service, Customs, Police, National Intelligence, and Narcotics Control, was set up to proactively respond to security situations at land borders, preventing crime and conflict escalation. It has significantly bolstered the country's capacity to tackle cross-border crimes such as migrant smuggling, human trafficking, and the threats of insecurity and terrorism. By fostering a unified approach through coordinated patrols, intelligence sharing, and rapid response capabilities, the JMT empowers agencies to proactively address threats, thereby safeguarding Ghana's borders and communities.

officers immediately applied the knowledge and equipment they received. This led to the detection of a significant number of falsified documents in the northern border regions, where security risks are particularly high.

In 2025, alongside continued capacity-building activities, ICMPD Côte d'Ivoire will contribute strategically by supporting the development of a national border law, which is expected to have a significant impact on the country's border management system.

BORDER SECURITY IN GHANA

In 2024, Ghana made significant strides in enhancing border security through strategic capacity-building projects, inter-agency collaboration and targeted technical support. ICMPD, in partnership with international donors, implemented two key projects: the Strengthening Border and Migration Management in Ghana (SMMIG) project, funded by the Government of Denmark, and the Strengthening Border Security in Ghana (SBS) project, funded by the European Union.

These capacity-building projects provided specialised training, equipment and technical support to the Government of Ghana. Understanding that security is not a "one-agency" affair, ICMPD prioritised inter-agency cooperation and coordination between border agencies in Ghana.

Looking ahead to 2025, ICMPD will continue to support Ghana's border security initiatives and enhance regional cooperation for long-term stability.

PAN-AFRICA: DRIVING DIALOGUE INTO ACTION

Within Pan-Africa, ICMPD further strengthened the Africa–EU Migration and Mobility Dialogue (MMD) Support Programme, advancing the Rabat and Khartoum Processes, and the African Union (AU)–European Union (EU) Continent-to-Continent Migration and Mobility Dialogue (C2CMMD). A comprehensive review of the Joint Valletta Action Plan (JVAP) Follow-Up (FU) was conducted and a Grant Facility was launched, empowering non-governmental stakeholders to play a greater role in shaping migration policies.

The MMD plays a pivotal role in strengthening EU–Africa cooperation, serving as the Secretariat for two regional and one continental dialogue while driving an operational component that transforms dialogue commitments into tangible actions. In 2024, the dialogues prioritised cross-cutting issues such as the whole-of-government approach, youth development, migration data and analysis, and free movement. Partner countries also intensified their focus on legal migration and mobility, reflecting evolving priorities.

The Rabat and Khartoum Processes strengthened collaboration by hosting a Joint High-Level Thematic Meeting, highlighting complementary pathways for skills mobility and the empowerment of related EU–Africa cooperation. Meanwhile, the C2CMMD advanced strategic engagement within the continental dialogue. A noteworthy milestone was the establishment of a Grant Facility, enabling civil society organisations (CSOs), research institutions, diaspora groups and local authorities to secure funding for initiatives that turn dialogue commitments into action.

In addition, a comprehensive review of the JVAP FU reaffirmed its critical relevance for African and European States, particularly in regional and funding analyses. As a result, the available tools are being improved to enable easier access and facilitate sharper and more targeted data products and analysis.

Turning Recommendations into Tangible Results

With the introduction of a Grant Facility for non-governmental stakeholders, the MMD bridges the gap between policy recommendations proposed by dialogue partners and the implementation of tangible actions at regional and continental levels. This initiative brings dialogue commitments to life by empowering stakeholders who are less involved in governmental migration dialogues. Their role as agents of development is reinforced, and their contribution to migration policymaking is significantly amplified.

Rabat Process Activities in 2024

Senior Officials' Meeting
CHAIRMANSHIP HANDOVER TO PORTUGAL
Rabat, Morocco
1 February

Thematic Meeting
REGULAR MIGRATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: ENTREPRENEURSHIP & DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT
Lisbon, Portugal
15–16 May

Joint High-Level Meeting
EMPOWERING EU–AFRICA COOPERATION: INNOVATIVE PATHWAYS FOR SKILLS MOBILITY
Lisbon, Portugal
16–17 October

Steering Committee
Brussels, Belgium
15 March

Thematic Meeting
MOBILITY SCHEMES AS A DRIVER OF CHANGE
Praia, Cabo Verde
20–21 June

Network of National Focal Points on Missing Migrants
ONLINE MEETINGS
18 July, 28 November

EURO–AFRICAN DIALOGUE ON MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT (RABAT PROCESS)

In 2024, under Portuguese chairmanship, the Rabat Process continued to build on the strategic framework established at the Ministerial Conference in Cádiz in December 2022. With a focus on regular migration and sustainable development, the Dialogue achieved significant milestones, including the launch of a Network of National Focal Points for Missing Migrants.

A dynamic agenda featured a special event on circular migration and two Thematic Meetings – one on diaspora-driven entrepreneurship, and another on maximising the potential of mobility schemes for sustainable development. Supported by the ICRC, Switzerland and The Gambia, the Network of National Focal Points for Missing Migrants convened twice, reinforcing cross-border and transnational cooperation.
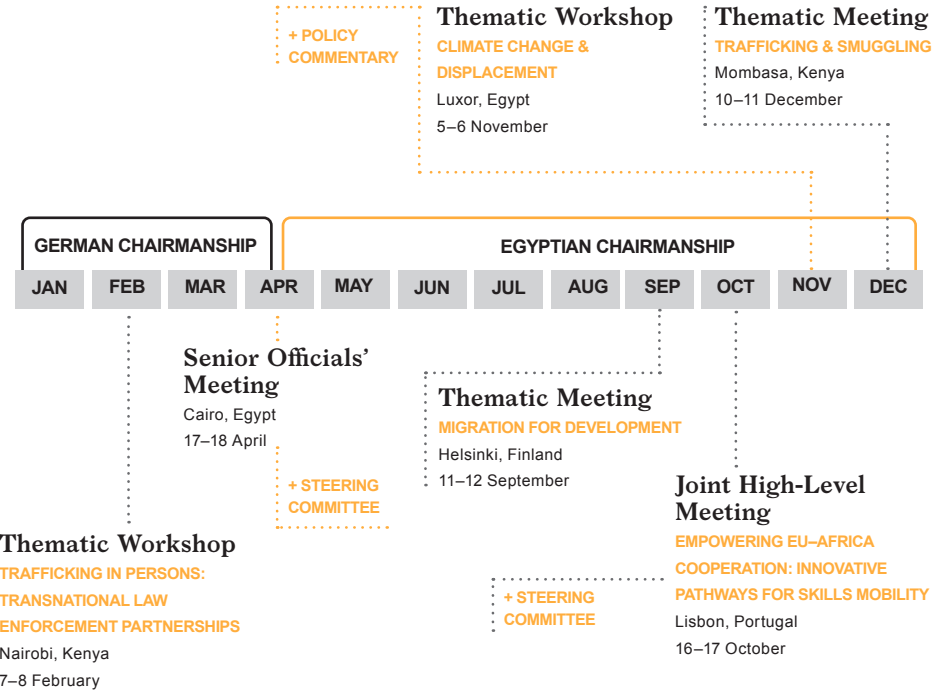
Finding Practical Solutions to Identify and Locate Missing Migrants

Launched by the ICRC in early 2024, the Network of National Focal Points for Missing Migrants aims to enhance cross-border and transnational cooperation on this critical issue. Seventeen Rabat Process partner countries have appointed national focal points, marking significant progress. A dedicated Thematic Meeting in 2025 will sustain momentum, foster collaboration and assess progress.

The steady commitment of partner countries and organisations underscored the Dialogue's continuing relevance and shared determination to move the migration debate forward.

EU HORN OF AFRICA MIGRATION ROUTE INITIATIVE (KHARTOUM PROCESS)

In 2024, the Khartoum Process celebrated a decade of fostering migration dialogue, paving the way for a Ministerial Conference in Cairo in 2025 during which a new strategic framework will be adopted. Under the German and later the Egyptian chairmanship, the Dialogue

Khartoum Process Activities in 2024

+ POLICY COMMENTARY

Thematic Workshop
CLIMATE CHANGE & DISPLACEMENT
Luxor, Egypt
5–6 November

Thematic Meeting
TRAFFICKING & SMUGGLING
Mombasa, Kenya
10–11 December

GERMAN CHAIRMANSHIP				EGYPTIAN CHAIRMANSHIP							
JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC

Senior Officials' Meeting
Cairo, Egypt
17–18 April

+ STEERING COMMITTEE

Thematic Meeting
MIGRATION FOR DEVELOPMENT
Helsinki, Finland
11–12 September

Joint High-Level Meeting
EMPOWERING EU–AFRICA COOPERATION: INNOVATIVE PATHWAYS FOR SKILLS MOBILITY
Lisbon, Portugal
16–17 October

+ STEERING COMMITTEE

Thematic Workshop
TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS: TRANSNATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT PARTNERSHIPS
Nairobi, Kenya
7–8 February

prioritised strengthening transnational law enforcement partnerships and exploring innovative approaches to combating human trafficking and migrant smuggling.

A cross-cutting focus on whole-of-government approaches to migration and development enriched the agenda, alongside a Thematic Meeting on the nexus between climate change and displacement in conflict-affected settings, which resulted in a commentary published in the ICMPD Policy Blog.

A key development was the enlargement of the Steering Committee, which welcomed Uganda and Finland as the sixth permanent members of the African and European groups, respectively – marking a stronger, more inclusive partnership.

JOINT VALLETTA ACTION PLAN FOLLOW-UP

In 2024, the JVAP Follow-Up (FU) underwent a comprehensive

Strengthening Synergies between the Khartoum and Rabat Processes

Building on a history of successful collaboration, the Khartoum and Rabat Processes deepened their partnership in 2024 through a Joint High-Level Thematic Meeting. This event highlighted complementary pathways for skills mobility and the strengthening of related EU–Africa cooperation. It reinforced the shared commitment to a more integrated approach and policy coherence, furthering their collective efforts to address migration challenges.

review to align its activities with the evolving priorities of African and European partners. The evaluation confirmed its continued relevance, particularly for regional and funding analyses, prompting plans to simplify tools for improved accessibility and more targeted, impactful data products. As in previous years, the JVAP FU featured prominently in Rabat and Khartoum

Process technical and strategic meetings, delivering focused data analyses to drive thematic discussions and maintain active engagement with dialogue partners.

To mark a decade of shared knowledge among JVAP partners, a dedicated stocktaking event facilitated by the JVAP FU fostered dialogue on key recommendations for enhanced data collection and analysis. Partners collaboratively developed a final set of actionable proposals and outlined a collective vision for the future of the JVAP FU.

AU–EU CONTINENT-TO-CONTINENT MIGRATION AND MOBILITY DIALOGUE (C2CMMD)

In 2024, the C2CMMD took significant steps to further support the AU's Migration Governance Training Programme by developing and piloting tailored training for media practitioners and communication specialists from CSOs and NGOs. In addition, an expert-led study explored the challenges and opportunities surrounding the ratification and popularisation of the AU Free Movement Protocol (FMP).

Partnering with Non-State actors

Launched in 2024, the MMD Grant Facility supports initiatives led by civil society organisations (CSOs), research institutions and other non-State actors in Africa. Across the continent, civil society plays a critical role in the sociopolitical landscape, and partnering with non-State actors was an opportunity to strengthen ICMPD's implementation of a human-rights-based approach (HRBA), benefiting from the expertise of partners on the subject. HRBA was central to the evaluation of the project design of the awarded grants, ensuring that people on the move are involved as active actors and that the supported communities are not harmed. The selected grants will also contribute to the reinforcement and respect of human rights by focusing on community-centred solutions that meet the specific needs of migrants and local authorities. To contribute to evidence-based policies and decision-making, the grants will harness collective wisdom, collect valuable data to address regional and global challenges and amplify the voices of migrants in policy dialogue and narrative.

Fostering Mobility within Africa

In a consultative meeting with AU Member States, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), CSOs, private sector actors, and the AU Commission, the C2CMMD facilitated a dynamic exchange on the challenges and opportunities linked to the ratification and implementation of the AU FMP. Participants discussed practical strategies to overcome obstacles, leverage opportunities, and boost the number of ratifications, providing valuable insights for the accompanying study.

The year also marked a turning point for strategic collaboration within the continental dialogue. A Senior Officials' Meeting laid the groundwork for a new strategic framework to be adopted in 2025, while deeper cooperation on migration research with relevant EU and AU institutions was pursued.

To increase visibility and enhance stakeholder engagement, an online knowledge management platform was launched, facilitating information sharing and collaboration across the dialogue.

EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

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A REGION STILL AFFECTED BY THE WAR ON UKRAINE

In the third year of Russia's full-scale military attack on Ukraine, ICMPD continues its support for the country and Ukrainians in and beyond this region. Central Asia's third Migrant Resource Centre will be established in Uzbekistan.

Preparing for Returns

In response to the Russian aggression, ICMPD immediately established Ukrainian consultation centres in Poland, the Czech Republic, and Germany. Looking ahead, ICMPD is prepared to expand its services to include voluntary return and reintegration counseling when it is safe for Ukrainians to return home. This will help preserve Ukraine's human capital, which is essential for the country's resilience and reconstruction efforts. These initiatives will remain central to ICMPD's work in 2025, which will continue to be guided by regular monitoring and analysis of the war's impact on the region's economy, politics, demographics, and society.

In 2024, the EECA Regional Office implemented 15 projects with a presence in all 10 countries of the region: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. ICMPD also continued to operate Ukrainian Consultation Centres in Berlin, Gdansk, and Prague, as well as a call centre in Warsaw.

In Moldova and Ukraine, ICMPD supported integrated border management through the provision of modern equipment, communication tools and capacity-building initiatives. In Moldova, support was provided under the SCOP project (Phases 1 and 2), funded by the Czech Ministry of the Interior, while in Ukraine, the EU-funded EU4IBM-Resilience project contributed to strengthening border management systems.

The RRR Ukraine project, funded by Germany and the Czech Republic, continued to support migration and consular governance, facilitating safe international mobility for displaced Ukrainians. This project operates consultation centres, engages with diaspora communities, and supports both the State Migration Service and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In addition, the CORE Ukraine project is set to expand consultations for displaced Ukrainians in Germany, with negotiations for funding from the AMIF National German Fund currently underway.

SUPPORTING A FRESH START

Sustainable reintegration remains a key focus of ICMPD's ongoing EU4IMPACT project in Armenia, which offers non-financial assistance and business coaching to returning migrants and their families.

Resilience, Reconstruction and Recovery

In February 2022, Russia launched a full-scale military attack on Ukraine, forcing millions of Ukrainians to flee their homes and seek refuge across Europe. In response to this unprecedented displacement, the European Union activated its Temporary Protection Directive in March 2022, granting those fleeing the war in Ukraine the right to protection. While beneficiaries of temporary protection are entitled to specific rights, many struggle to fully access these due to language barriers, lack of information, and other challenges.

To address these gaps, ICMPD launched the Resilience, Reconstruction, and Recovery of Ukrainian Migration and Consular Services Project in 2022. The project aims, inter alia, to ensure that temporarily displaced Ukrainians in Germany, Poland, and the Czech Republic can fully enjoy their rights under temporary protection. The Ukrainian Consultation Centres, established as part of the project, provide vital information and guidance to displaced Ukrainians on their rights and obligations, including access to social and health services, mobility, and legal pathways in the host countries. These centres help address critical issues, such as: How can a mother who fled Mariupol with her children enrol them in school in Germany? Where can an elderly woman from Kharkiv, without identity documents, seek assistance in the Czech Republic?

By offering tailored support and advice, the project helps displaced Ukrainians navigate complex bureaucracies in their host countries while ensuring that their human rights, guaranteed to them under temporary protection, are upheld.

In addition, ICMPD provides reintegration support through the RRF project, building the capacity of Armenian authorities to better manage returnees. In other parts of the region, ICMPD worked to improve migration management through the EMICS 2 project in Armenia, the MOBILAZE 2 project in Azerbaijan, and the STREAMinG 2 project in Georgia. In Georgia, ICMPD also supported a civil society facility focused on migration and development, which provides small grants to SCOs to harness the potential of migration development.

In Central Asia, ICMPD operates two Migrant Resource Centres in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and is collaborating with Uzbekistan to establish a similar centre in Tashkent under the EU-funded PROTECT project. ICMPD also supports the Secretariat functions of the EU-funded BOMCA programme (Phase 10) and leads a component dedicated to improving living conditions in cross-border regions. This initiative builds the capacities of both State and non-State actors in Central Asia for cross-border cooperation and provides grants to SCOs working to support vulnerable populations in border areas.

In 2024, ICMPD hosted its annual International Summer School in Georgia, bringing together 55 participants from Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, and Ukraine. This was the 11th edition of the Summer School, which continues to benefit from ICMPD's extensive experience and a well-established curriculum.

PRAGUE PROCESS

2024 marked the 15th anniversary of the Prague Process. The progress made so far motivates participating States to expand their collaboration in times of unprecedented challenges.

MEDITERRANEAN

The responses of participating States formed the basis for the conceptualisation of the fourth phase of Prague Process cooperation, elaborated by the Czech Republic with the support of the Secretariat. Following its approval by the Strategic Group and the Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM), the concept was also supported by the European Commission. Thanks to funding from DG HOME, the Comprehensive Action Plan Support (CAPS) was launched under the Migration Partnership Facility (MPF) on 1 July 2023, covering the entire duration of the action plan.

As per the ministerial documents, this fourth phase of the Prague Process cooperation includes some novel elements, such as the Digital Lab and the Data & Resilience Hub, which aim to address the specific needs highlighted by the participating States. Moreover, four State-led thematic components will tackle the priority areas identified in the action plan – namely, 1. irregular migration and migrant smuggling (Hungary with Kyrgyzstan); 2. readmission, return and reintegration (Czech Republic with Moldova); 3. legal and labour migration (Romania); 4. asylum and international protection (Lithuania). Overall, the thematic components foresee the implementation of 24 activities within a two-year period, including workshops, training courses, online meetings, study visits and expert missions.
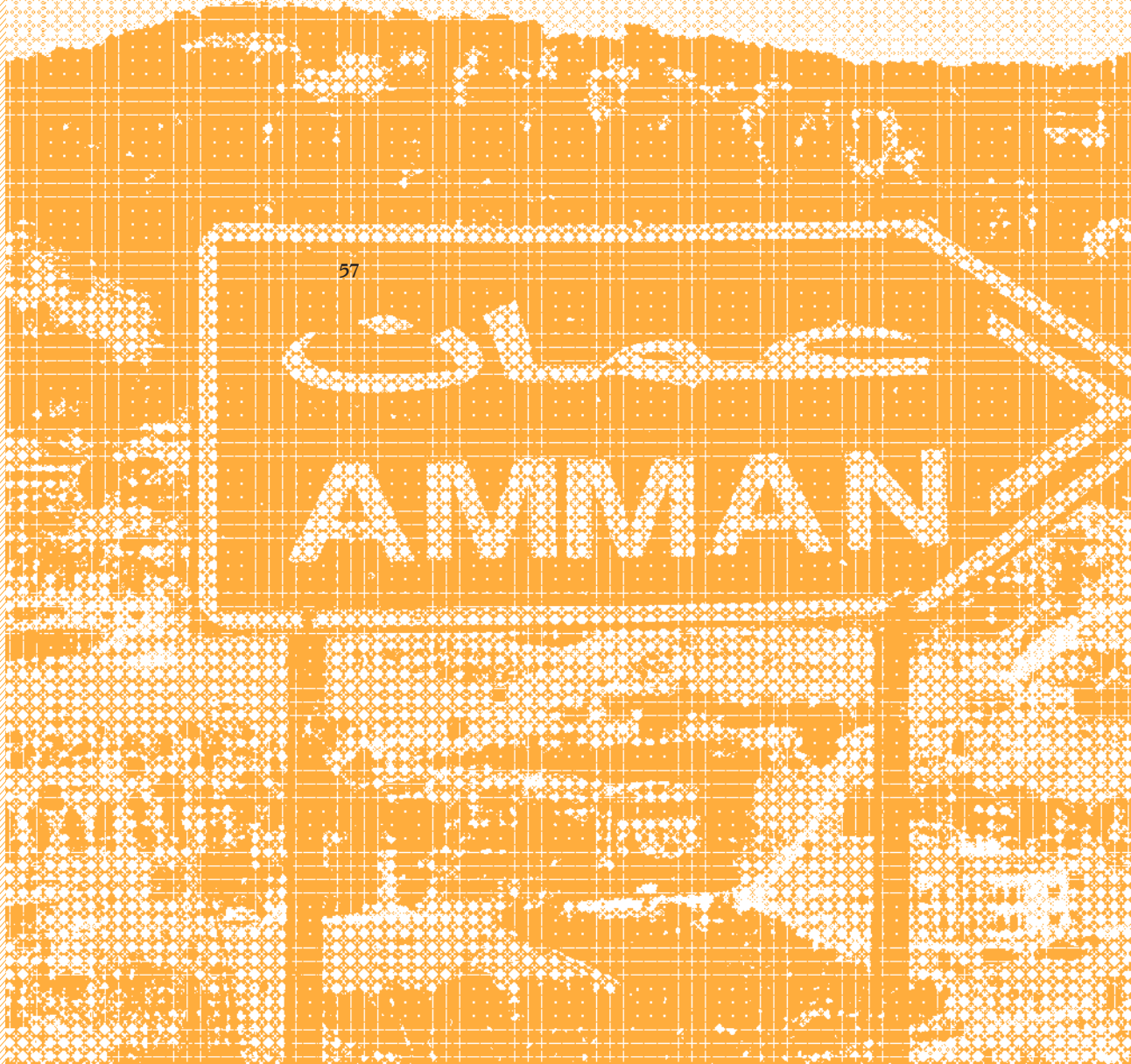
Fifteen years of Progress

In September 2024, senior officials of participating States gathered in Chisinau to celebrate the anniversary of the intergovernmental dialogue. They emphasised the strength of unity, resilience, and innovation that have defined the Prague Process since its inception in April 2009. The greater alignment of national policies and legislation across the region and the concrete benefits delivered are key achievements.

States and Partners

- **EU MEMBER STATES**
- **ALBANIA**
- **ARMENIA**
- **AZERBAIJAN**
- **BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**
- **GEORGIA**
- **KAZAKHSTAN**

- **KOSOVO***
- **KYRGYZSTAN**
- **LIECHTENSTEIN**
- **MOLDOVA**
- **MONTENEGRO**
- **NORTH MACEDONIA**
- **NORWAY**
- **SERBIA**

- **SWITZERLAND**
- **TAJIKISTAN**
- **TÜRKIYE**
- **TURKMENISTAN**
- **UKRAINE**
- **UZBEKISTAN**

* This reference should be understood in the context of UNSCR 1244/99

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PUTTING JOINT LEADERSHIP AND SHARED RESPONSIBILITY TO THE TEST

From 2021 to 2024, ICMPD undertook a journey of consultations, formulation and piloting of an innovative approach. The Migration Capacity Partnerships for the Mediterranean (MCP Med) has become the delivery framework for ICMPD's strategy in the region. 2025 will put it to the test.

Balancing Security Concerns with Humanism

ICMPD promotes and supports integrated border management (IBM) through a range of projects across the Mediterranean region. A comprehensive and efficient IBM fully embeds fundamental rights from legal framework to practice, balancing security concerns with humanitarian obligations. A consultative co-creation process cements the role and place of human rights in national IBM strategies.

Putting this into practice requires the professionalisation of capacities within institutions, from leadership to frontline staff. Projects such as the EU-funded Border Management Training for Libya mobilise ICMPD's Training Institute for Migration Capacity Partnerships to design curricula, train authorised trainers and deliver human rights-based training. This approach will be further strengthened by the Danish-funded project Delivering on Migration Governance in the Mediterranean through Capacity Partnerships, which prioritises the integration of human rights principles into governance frameworks.

2024 underscored once again the fluid and ever-changing nature of migration routes in an increasingly destabilised world, and once again the Mediterranean was at the centre of it all. The route from West Africa to the Canary Islands experienced the sharpest rise in movements, while flows across the Central Mediterranean saw a significant decline.

Despite unintended consequences that require adjustments, one trend stands out: the EU's bilateral partnerships with individual countries are emerging as the dominant model. After Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and Lebanon, now Jordan has concluded such an agreement – with more to follow.

The success of these partnerships will be measured by their ability not only to support southern partners in managing migration within their own borders but also to enable them to project their capacities along migration routes in coordination

AI-Powered Migration Governance

Nowadays, modernisation is not a stage but a state of constant digital transformation. ICMPD in the Mediterranean showcased the power of intelligent reporting using AI to improve migration governance. Combining dashboards, analytical tools, and structured reporting processes, this approach enables stakeholders to distil complex data into actionable insights while ensuring transparency, fostering collaboration, and driving AI-powered progress. The Migration Capacity Partnerships Training Institute reflects ICMPD's vision of connecting people and delivering innovative solutions.

with European efforts. Investment in these capacities will play a defining role in Europe's migration agenda – determining the effectiveness of these partnerships.

WELL-SUITED DELIVERY FRAMEWORK

In this light, the MCP Med is a well-suited delivery framework. Denmark was the first country to fully embrace this approach, developing a Regional Migration Governance Programme for the Mediterranean, while Capacity projects took

shape in Jordan, Lebanon and Algeria. Other key partners, including the Netherlands and Switzerland, have joined the effort. This reflects a new, change-driven intervention logic that directly reinforces EU partnerships and helps to redefine migration cooperation around the following principles:

No Partnership Without Dialogue – Aligning bilateral partnerships with regional dialogue frameworks – such as EUROMED Migration, the Rabat, Khartoum, and Budapest Processes – is critical to ensuring coherence and coordination. These platforms must evolve into concrete mechanisms for cooperation, capacity-development, and operational responses.

Walk the Talk – Partnerships are long-term commitments. While ad hoc cooperation may deliver quick wins, integrating action into partnerships ensures strategic alignment, strengthens intervention logic, and maximises impact. Joint

leadership must take place along migration routes, not just in conference rooms.

Winning Formulas Need Active Ingredients – Success depends on committed partners, clear priorities, and tangible results. Leadership, capacities, and responsibilities – a successful partnership ensures that all stakeholders contribute and benefit.

Your Capacities Are Our Capacities – Sharing is the essence of partnership. From a common understanding to joint leadership in action, empowering partnerships means valuing, investing in and mobilising each partner's capacities.

Scale It If You Mean It – Effective migration governance hinges on scale. If we are serious about sustainable impact, we must mobilise resources at scale – from policy to infrastructure, from training to technology.

SILK ROUTES

STEP BY STEP TO BETTER SYSTEMS FOR MANAGING REGULAR AND IRREGULAR MIGRATION

In 2024, ICMPD stepped up its work to provide objective information and advice to potential migrants beyond the capitals of the region. Through various programmes and cooperations, ICMPD worked with governments and institutions to improve return and reintegration as well as border management. The implementation of new systems has led to a decrease in irregular migration.

In 2024 MRC Afghanistan reached out to thirteen million Afghans through its awareness-raising and counselling services to provide information about resettlement programmes, humanitarian admissions, and complementary pathways. MRC Afghanistan will also continue its partnership with the EUAA's Experts Platform to provide EU Member States with information on migratory trends in the Afghan context.

In Bangladesh, ICMPD continued to implement capacity-building measures to improve border management in the country through training and the provision of equipment to the Immigration Police and the School of Intelligence. As a result, seizures of counterfeit EU travel documents at Dhaka Airport increased fivefold between 2022 and 2024.

In India, ICMPD continued its support through targeted interventions under the EU–India Cooperation and Dialogue on Migration and Mobility, focusing on both regular and irregular migration. This has strengthened EU–India cooperation on return and readmission

The NORAQ Cooperation

In 2024, ICMPD supported the Nordic countries to officially launch the Nordic Cooperation on Return and Reintegration in Iraq (NORAQ) – a framework of coordinated projects aimed at supporting the Federal Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government with their ongoing efforts to improve their migration governance capacities, including better and more coordinated reintegration services for returnees. Under NORAQ, several important results were achieved, most notably the establishment of a Migrant Resource Centre (MRC) in Erbil, finalisation of the establishment of an MRC in Sulaymaniyah, and the launch of an EU-accredited reintegration training programme for officials, along with the refurbishment of government training facilities.

and deepened collaboration on policy and operational aspects of return procedures.

A MAJOR MILESTONE FOR IRAQ

A major milestone was the adoption of the National Integrated Border Management Strategy by the Government of Iraq. This paved the way for additional support, including capacity-building initiatives and the provision of essential equipment, ranging from radiation detectors for BCPs and night vision devices for

land border patrols to a tailored Border Force Information Management System designed to streamline reporting, data collection and risk analysis. Dozens of national master trainers, graduates of specialised ICMPD training, are now independently conducting training sessions on document security, human rights at borders, and risk analysis in Baghdad, Basrah, Erbil, and Sulaymaniyah.

An MRC was established in Erbil (KRI) and the Ministry of Migration and Displacement strengthened its return and reintegration capacities by refurbishing its training facilities and creating specialised courses for government policymakers and practitioners. The groundwork was also laid for a comprehensive government approach to return and reintegration, and efforts were made to strengthen the government's monitoring, evaluation, and learning capabilities. An expansion of the MRC network in Iraq is planned for 2025, including the establishment of an MRC in Sulaymaniyah.

MORE COUNSELLING IN PAKISTAN

ICMPD expanded its local partnerships in Pakistan to reach more rural and underserviced populations. The opening of a new MRC in Peshawar meant that, for the first time, information and counselling services on the dangers of irregular migration was available to an even larger pool of potential and intending migrants from rural and remote areas.

The border management programme supported the inauguration of advanced document security offices at international airports in Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar and Multan, as well as Pakistan's first national Risk Analysis Unit. Each office checks suspected forged documents and assesses passengers based on risk profiles generated by the Risk Analysis Unit at FIA Headquarters.

These new systems contributed to a significant decrease in irregular migration flows from Pakistan towards the EU in 2024, with a 16% increase in detections of irregular migration attempts by the FIA at Pakistan's borders, in parallel with a significant fall in asylum applications and irregular arrivals into the EU. Representing the single largest decrease among all nationalities last year, the detection of Pakistani citizens attempting irregular crossings into the EU fell by over 37% and asylum applications were down by 32%.

Rights-Based Processes in Iraq and Pakistan

In 2024, ICMPD prioritised the integration of a rights-based approach into border management and security frameworks in Iraq and Pakistan. In Iraq, with funding from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ICMPD rolled out a national training programme on human rights and migration for border guards in the Ministry of Interior and the Border Port Commission. A network of national trainers was empowered to deliver a national training curriculum on human rights that emphasised the protection of human rights in border control processes, such as interviewing, interception and rescue operations. Pre- and post-knowledge tests show an average 40% increase in the knowledge of officers who attended the training conducted by the master trainers last autumn. In Pakistan, ICMPD assisted the Federal Investigation Agency in establishing specialised document examination offices and new operational procedures at five international airports. As well as improving the detection of irregular migration attempts and the use of fake documents at these airports, ICMPD worked with the FIA to place human rights protections and principles at the centre of these innovative new practices. The outcome is a border management framework that balances the operational priorities of preventing irregular migration with the State's obligation to ensure the protection of the human rights of all people at the borders.

6 YEARS OF INTEGRATED BORDER MANAGEMENT IN BANGLADESH, IRAQ AND PAKISTAN

2024 saw the completion of the first phase of the EU-funded IBM Silk Routes project. The regional programme helped the governments of Bangladesh, Iraq and Pakistan to build more effective and efficient border management systems. Between 2019 and 2024, the project delivered the following results:

Strengthening Institutions

2	IBM Strategic Frameworks developed in Iraq and Pakistan
38	border and law enforcement agencies engaged in IBM strategy development
100%	of IBM Strategy and Policy frameworks include human rights

Developing Operational Capacity

1810	border officials trained
62%	average increase in knowledge and skills
	Border Force Information Management System developed in Iraq
	Document Examination second-line offices established at Islamabad and Dhaka international airports

Sustainable Training Systems

6	training rooms established/refurbished and equipped
58	national master trainers qualified
68	training events delivered by national master trainers
1314	officers trained by national master trainers

International Partnerships

4	study visits to EU Member States Participation in 6 international Border Management conferences, and 2 Identity Week conferences
4	complementary initiatives developed with European partners

THE BUDAPEST PROCESS

Budapest Process Ministerial Conference

300+ Participants

50 Countries

13 Intl Organisations

30+ Bilateral Meetings

Ministerial Declaration Priority Goals

→ Prevent irregular migration and fight against migrant smuggling

→ Strengthen pathways for legal migration and mobility

→ Strengthen international, regional, and bilateral cooperation for safe returns and sustainable reintegration

→ Strengthen the positive impact of migration on development

→ Ensure international protection and respect of the rights of refugees

→ Support the integration of regular migrants

Main Outcomes

TWO AGREEMENTS ON MIGRATION GOVERNANCE

STRONG MINISTERIAL PARTICIPATION

ROBUST BILATERAL EXCHANGE

The Budapest Process met at Senior Official level three times in 2024: in Stockholm, online, and in Budapest. These meetings culminated in the development of a Declaration and Action Plan that laid out a comprehensive approach to irregular migration, labour mobility, return and reintegration, international protection and integration.

The 7th Budapest Process Ministerial Conference, at which these two documents were adopted, saw strong high-level participation, with 20 ministers and deputy ministers from Europe, Central Asia and the Silk Routes Region in attendance. With more than 300 delegates present, the conference was widely reported in the international media as a success for multilateral cooperation and ICMPD.

Hosted by Hungary, the event was chaired by the Hungarian Minister of the Interior Dr Sándor Pintér, who was flanked by his Turkish counterpart, Minister Ali Yerlikaya, and joined by Johannes Luchner of the European Commission as well as ICMPD's Director General Michael Spindelegger. The Ministerial Declaration and Action Plan were acclaimed for their holistic approach to the complexities of migration along this route, maintaining a multi-stakeholder, whole-of-route and rights-based framework throughout.

Looking ahead, the Ministerial Declaration and Action Plan will help in shaping the policies of Budapest Process countries and inform new international projects.

TÜRKİYE
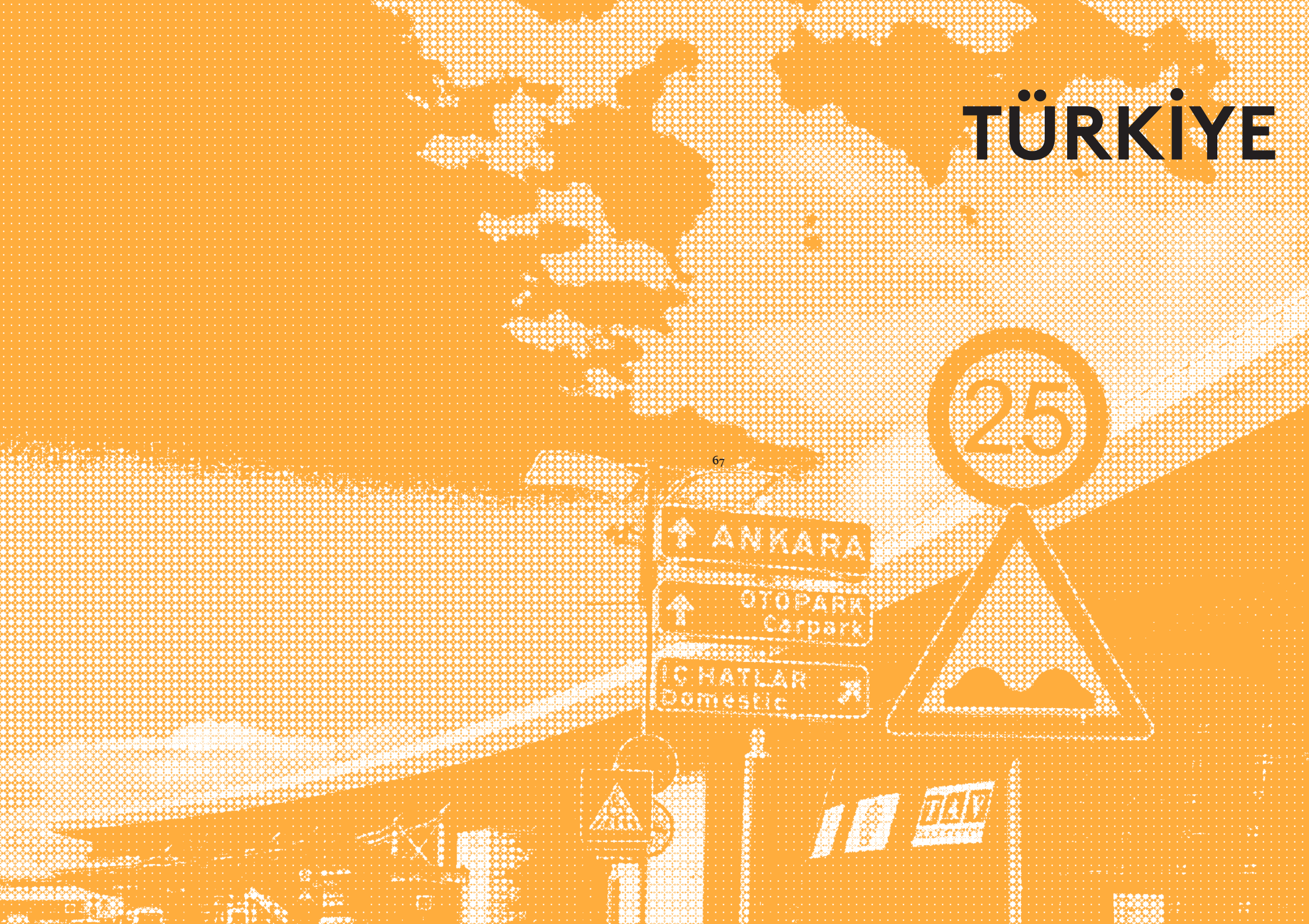
TÜRKİYE REMAINS CENTRAL TO REGIONAL MIGRATION MANAGEMENT

The evolving migration landscape, coupled with the growing diversity of migrants and refugees as well as heightened expectations for Türkiye's role in managing migration, presents complex challenges and places significant demands on public institutions responsible for migration and border management.

Given ongoing trends in the return of Syrian refugees and expanded return initiatives, Türkiye, as host to the world's largest Syrian migrant population, Türkiye remains central to regional migration management. This underscores the rising need for supporting adaptable and durable solutions.

ICMPD Türkiye focused its efforts on promoting durable and multifaceted solutions by providing expertise and tailor-made technical assistance for sustainable migration governance in Türkiye and on contributing to the overall work of ICMPD along the relevant migration routes. By concentrating on capacity building, cross-sector collaboration, innovative approaches and strategic partnerships, ICMPD Türkiye maintained its commitment to contribute to sustainable and coordinated migration solutions at both national and regional levels.
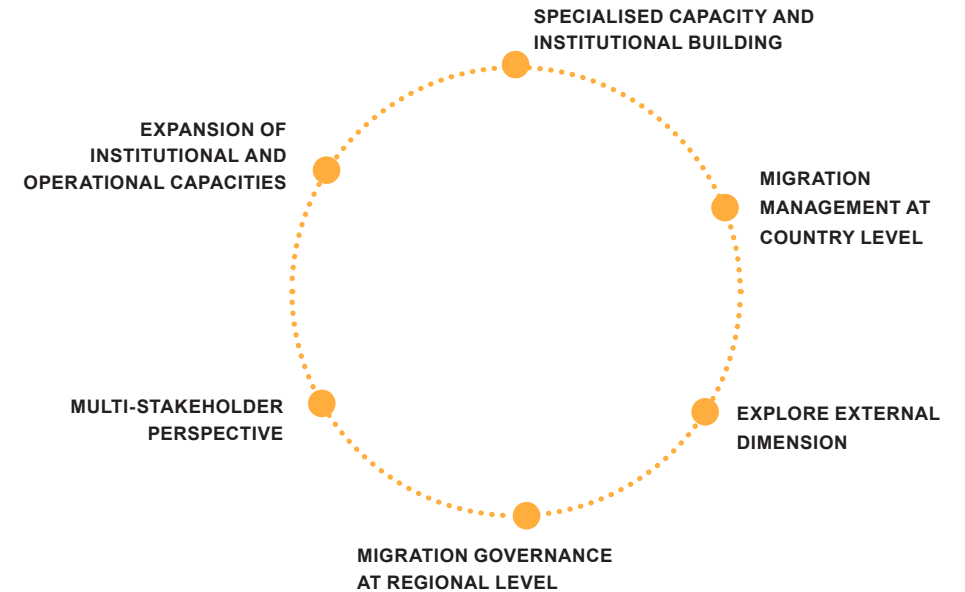
Programmatic Approach

ICMPD contributed to governance frameworks and expanded its initiatives to improve migration and border management in Türkiye. Activities focused on specialised areas in a complementary manner, simultaneously covering the priority areas of migration management, border management, migration and development, and cross-cutting issues. Leveraging past achievements, ICMPD adopted a programmatic approach, focusing on key thematic areas and specialised projects. Through close collaboration with relevant public institutions, a responsive, adaptive and effective strategy was applied to support the management of and response to emerging migration challenges.

ICMPD Türkiye continued its commitment to collaboration, rigour, integration, responsibility, and excellence by strengthening migration governance through targeted initiatives. Through strategic reviews, ongoing consultations and regular staff meetings, ICMPD Turkiye ensured continuous evaluation of priorities and institutional alignment, demonstrating rigour. This way of work strengthened institutional capacities and resulted in the timely adapted and effective implementation of migration management strategies.

ICMPD Türkiye's Programmatic Approach

- SPECIALISED CAPACITY AND INSTITUTIONAL BUILDING
- MIGRATION MANAGEMENT AT COUNTRY LEVEL
- EXPLORE EXTERNAL DIMENSION
- MIGRATION GOVERNANCE AT REGIONAL LEVEL
- MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVE
- EXPANSION OF INSTITUTIONAL AND OPERATIONAL CAPACITIES

ENHANCING RETURN PROGRAMMES

In the area of general migration, ICMPD focused on addressing critical issues, including irregular migration, return, international protection, human trafficking, and social cohesion. Each project within its portfolio was meticulously designed and tailored to meet the needs of different stakeholders, ensuring that the solutions were context-specific, comprehensive and effective in promoting sustainable migration governance.

The NAVRR project, a flagship initiative in voluntary return and reintegration, supported the stabilisation and improvement of return programme in line with Türkiye's migration priorities. The project strengthened institutional and operational capacities, facilitated cooperation with countries of origin (CoOs) to improve return mechanisms, and provided financial and logistical assistance to returnees. It also contributed to the development of physical infrastructure to ensure safe and dignified return.

STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONS AND FRAMEWORKS

The focus was on reinforcing institutional structures and legislative frameworks to establish a more effective, coordinated, and comprehensive approach to border management. Through its six carefully designed projects, ICMPD contributed border surveillance capabilities, fostered greater international and inter-agency cooperation, tackled cross-border crime, and integrated human rights-based principles into border management practices.

Mainstreaming Human Rights Across All Projects

In order to mainstream awareness and application of human rights, principles of human rights-sensitive migration and border management are embedded as a horizontal specific objective across all projects simultaneously implemented by ICMPD in Türkiye.

Key priorities related to border governance, such as strengthening border surveillance, improving legal frameworks and building institutional capacities, are implemented through a human rights-sensitive approach. This ensures that there is a good framework, capacity and understanding in place to protect people's rights in the application of border management measures, while at the same time creating conditions to facilitate safe and orderly migration. Beneficiary institutions are supported in their efforts to mainstream human rights, exercise due diligence, and engage in outreach and trust-building with border communities and civil society.

In relation to overall migration governance, the NAVR and EMPATHY projects support safe and dignified, voluntary return processes. RECONNECT II aims to strengthen the capacities to provide human rights-based voluntary return counselling for irregular migrants. The ENACT project aims to strengthen the capacity to implement human rights-based alternatives to detention for irregular migrants. The INNOVATIVE project organises consultation events with stakeholders on key issues such as entry bans, administrative detention and inadmissible passengers, and compilation of ECtHR decisions related to migration cases.

To reinforce the international protection regime, the EMOTION project aims to reduce backlogs and administrative pausing of procedures for processing international protection applications without further delays. To support the reduction of trafficking in human beings in Türkiye, the P-ACT project provides assistance by improving early identification and referral processes and applying preventive measures.

To strengthen the livelihoods of refugees and host communities, the ENHANCER project facilitates access to the labour market for refugees and host communities, while the Scholarship project provides support for access to higher education.

Türkiye's National Integrated Border Management Strategy was developed through a collaborative approach, with the revised road map for its implementation shared with the beneficiary to incorporate feedback, fostering ownership and sustainability.

A standout initiative within this portfolio was the SAFE project, funded by the European Commission. This project significantly bolstered Türkiye's capacity to address irregular migration and cross-border threats by enhancing both technological and institutional capabilities. The SAFE project supported the Directorate General of Border Management (DGBM) in modernising border surveillance systems while ensuring compliance with international human rights standards.

SYRIANS UNDER TEMPORARY PROTECTION

ICMPD Türkiye made significant progress in improving the situation of Syrians under temporary protection through the EU-funded ENHANCER project, implemented as part of the EU Facility for Refugees in Türkiye programme. This initiative focused on fostering socio-economic development, enhancing private sector collaboration and facilitating labour market integration in order to strengthen the livelihoods of both the host community and Syrians under temporary protection.

The project promoted entrepreneurship, supported small and medium-sized enterprises, and established partnerships with private sector actors and local business stakeholders. By creating new employment opportunities across 11 cities in Türkiye, ENHANCER contributed to sustainable community development and long-term social and economic integration, serving as a model for inclusive development in migration contexts.

To improve skills and labour market integration, ICMPD provided sector-specific training, mentoring and networking opportunities. Technical entrepreneurship training focused on business planning and quality assurance, and marketing mentorship programmes further supported business development by providing guidance and access to professional networks.

To complement the thematic focused specialised work, ICMPD Türkiye also contributed to advancing migration policy development, fostering cooperation frameworks and improving migration narratives and communication through flagship projects.

WESTERN BALKANS

THE EU ACCESSION PROCESS AS A TURNING POINT

ICMPD remains a strong and committed partner to the Western Balkans (WB), and is committed to supporting the partners in the region in their EU integration journey through effective migration management and comprehensive capacity-building initiatives. The efforts of the WB team for 2024 highlight the importance of collaborative action in addressing migration challenges and ensuring the region's future stability and prosperity.

The year 2024 marked a significant turning point for ICMPD's engagement in the Western Balkans, reflecting the growing urgency to support the region's EU accession process. With Chapter 24 of the EU accession process at its core, which covers migration management, border security and the fight against organised crime, ICMPD solidified its commitment by establishing a dedicated Western Balkans structure and appointing a special representative for the region. Its increased presence, with offices in Belgrade, Sarajevo and Skopje, underscores ICMPD's hands-on approach to addressing regional challenges.

ICMPD's 2024 initiatives focused on improving migration governance, bolstering border security, and combating human trafficking and migrant smuggling. Leveraging its expertise in migration policy development and implementation, ICMPD continued its successful collaborations with government agencies, law enforcement and non-State actors in the region. Building on robust and enduring partnerships with the six Western Balkan partners – three of which, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia and Serbia, are ICMPD Member States – these initiatives are strategically designed to strengthen regional migration governance and align national systems with EU standards.

EMPOWERING REGIONAL STAKEHOLDERS

The region's flagship project is the Western Balkan Return Mechanism (WBRM), launched in December 2023, which aims to improve authorities' capacities in return and readmission management, promote sustainable migration solutions, and strengthen inter-agency coordination. The WBRM project aims to empower regional stakeholders to take ownership of return operations, ensuring more effective and sustainable practices through direct engagement with countries of origin.

Notably, 2024 marked the conclusion of negotiations for two key projects: the TASLE project in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), set to launch in early 2025, and the EMPOWER project in Serbia, which began in October 2024. TASLE aims to improve law enforcement capabilities in BiH to address organised crime, including human trafficking and migrant smuggling, through advancements in fingerprinting, money laundering and IT systems.

Meanwhile, EMPOWER is dedicated to establishing a National Programme for Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) in Serbia, developing a sustainable AVRR system, and strengthening institutional frameworks for reintegration efforts.

Looking ahead to 2025, ICMPD plans to expand its work in Albania through the EU4SAFEALB Phase II initiative, strengthening border and migration management to align with EU standards. This project will improve migrant reception capacities, support Albania's migration strategy and prioritise migrant rights, fostering sustainable migration governance.

Furthermore, ICMPD expects to launch WBRM II in partnership with the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and a consortium of several other EU Member States, which will extend its work on return and readmission management across the Western Balkans for an additional four years.

Western Balkan Return Mechanism (WBRM)

TASLE: Strengthening Law Enforcement Capacities in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) to Fight Organised Crime

EMPOWER: Establishment of the National Programme for Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration of the Republic of Serbia

EU4SAFEALB Phase II: Technical Assistance to Further Strengthen Border and Migration Management in Albania

WB Partners: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia

Strengthening Bilateral Cooperation with Bangladesh

In June 2024, Istanbul hosted key technical consultations between Western Balkan (WB) partners and Bangladesh to advance cooperation on returns and legal labour migration. The discussions produced a road map for drafting bilateral agreements, strengthening embassy coordination, and engaging Bangladesh's labour migration agency to regulate migration and reduce the risk of absconding. Operational challenges were addressed, and follow-up consultations were planned to strengthen return mechanisms. Supported by EU experts and ICMPD, this initiative highlights the WBRM project's role in fostering sustainable migration management and stronger WB–Bangladesh ties while setting a precedent for future collaborations.

This reference should be understood in the context of UNSCR 1244/99

GLOBAL INITIATIVES UNIT

GLOBAL INITIATIVES

Throughout 2024, the facilities coordinated by ICMPD's Global Initiatives Unit continued to deliver capacity development, forge innovative partnerships, and enhance dialogue between the EU and a wide range of partner countries globally, spanning various issues of common interest.

The MIEUX+ Legacy

The MIgration EU eXpertise (MIEUX) initiative concluded its 15-year journey at the end of March 2024. MIEUX supported regional organisations, national ministries, local authorities, parliamentary bodies, judicial actors, and civil society organisations in improving the governance and management of migration and mobility through capacity development, reaching over 100 countries and involving close to 500 migration experts from the EU and partner countries. Working on a demand-driven basis, responding quickly to requests, and fostering peer-to-peer exchange of knowledge, MIEUX acted as a "push factor" in opening the door to human rights and gender mainstreaming across its interventions, leaving behind a rich legacy of established practices and connections in all areas of migration.

5 Years of the EU Global Diaspora Facility

16 PROJECTS

120+ EXPERTS

12 DIASPORA YOUTH INTERNS

74 DIASPORA

5 YEARS OF THE EU GLOBAL DIASPORA FACILITY

120 COUNTRIES MAPPED

220+ PUBLICATIONS

4000+ PARTICIPANTS

5 CASE STUDIES

250+ ACTIVITIES & EVENTS

EU GLOBAL DIASPORA FACILITY (EUDiF)

EUDiF completed a successful first phase and started its second in June 2024. In its first five years, EUDiF has become a dynamic, trusted partner and purveyor of knowledge on diaspora engagement for development through a combination of original research, multi-stakeholder dialogue and innovative capacity-development projects with government and diaspora partners around the world. The second half of the year saw a call for public institutions receive over 100 applications, while the project's first grant scheme for diaspora-led projects received over 200, setting EUDiF up for further innovation and learning in this impactful arena.

MIGRATION PARTNERSHIP FACILITY (MPF)

In 2024, the MPF experienced significant growth and consolidation. Its budget increased to €173 million, enabling new projects to explore broader horizons, engage more stakeholders and operate in additional countries. Notably, the number of EU Member States involved increased to 23, with Ireland and Finland participating for the first time, contributing to projects addressing labour migration needs in critical shortage sectors.

Consolidation was marked by the development of the Technical Assistance Scheme (TAS), which launched six new projects. These included three in Turkey, which focused on trafficking, border management, and return and reintegration, and one in Mauritania to manage the urgent needs of disembarked migrants. The remaining two supported consular needs and migrants' rights.
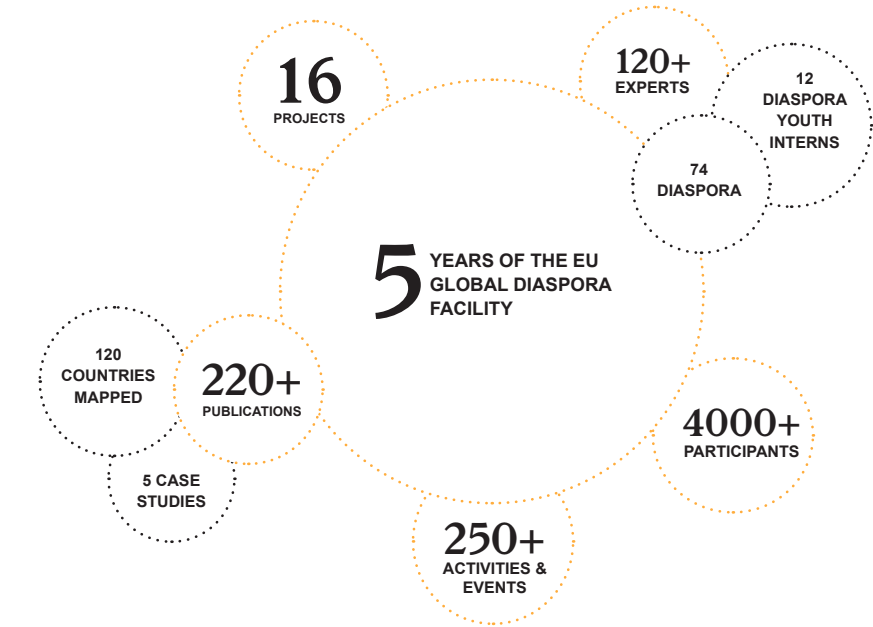
The MPF also advanced legal pathways for labour migration and EU Talent Partnerships, launching several research products and engaging its community of over 200 European labour migration experts.

Building on these achievements, the MPF's life cycle was extended to 2029, paving the way for greater scalability and long-term sustainability of its projects.

RETURN AND REINTEGRATION FACILITY (RRF)

In 2024, the RRF continued to provide technical and operational assistance to EU Member States and Schengen Associated Countries in the area of return and reintegration. A significant development was the advancement of digital reintegration efforts through the Reintegration Information and Assistance Tool (RIAT), which was successfully implemented across all Member States.

In addition, the RRF expanded its activities in return counselling and outreach through its Counselling Lab and initiated the Medra+ project aimed at providing medical assistance throughout the return process.

On an international level, RRF worked to strengthen cooperation with countries of origin by promoting local ownership of reintegration support, providing complementary assistance and mapping local support services. Through these various initiatives, RRF is improving reintegration processes both within the EU and in countries of origin, contributing to long-term sustainability and increased local engagement.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

NAVIGATING MIGRATION DYNAMICS TOGETHER: ICMPD'S COMMITMENT TO ITS MEMBER STATES AND PARTNERS

Volatile migration dynamics continued to influence policy debates and priorities of ICMPD Member States and key partners in 2024. Conflicts and instability, notably in Ukraine, the Middle East and Africa, continued to shape migration patterns in and to Europe, while major elections brought migration to the forefront of national debates. Many ICMPD Member States were facing the dual challenge of managing irregular arrivals while at the same time addressing domestic labour shortages.

ICMPD Member States

▬ MEMBER STATES

Austria	Hungary	Romania
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Ireland	Serbia
Bulgaria	Malta	Slovakia
Croatia	The Netherlands	Slovenia
Czech Republic	Republic of North Macedonia	Sweden
Germany	Poland	Switzerland
Greece	Portugal	Türkiye

Leveraging its unique membership of European countries, ICMPD supported Member States to navigate the migration complexities in 2024 and created valuable opportunities for its Member States and key partners to convene and address joint challenges and opportunities in the field of migration. Exchanges encompassed the shifting migration landscape, developments in the Middle East and Ukraine, progress on national and European migration priorities, and the implications for both EU and non-EU countries of the newly adopted European Pact on Migration and Asylum. In 2024, ICMPD played a pivotal role in supporting Member States in the development of their National Implementation Plans for the European Pact on Migration and Asylum, within the framework of the Technical Support Instrument funded by DG Reform. A key element of this process was fostering knowledge exchange to enable Member States to learn from one another's experiences, address common challenges, and share innovative solutions to strengthen migration governance.

Chairmanship of the ICMPD Steering Group

Greece chaired the ICMPD Steering Group in 2024 under the theme "A holistic approach for balanced migration partnerships", focusing on the external dimension of migration management, regular pathways and partnerships. A high-level event entitled "A holistic approach for balanced migration partnerships" was organised in Brussels. This event marked the handover of the Chairmanship of ICMPD's Steering Group from Türkiye to Greece and included high-level attendance from both countries, as well as Ylva Johansson, European Commissioner for Home Affairs, Dimitris Kairidis, Minister for Migration and Asylum of Greece, and ICMPD's Director General Michael Spindelegger. Furthermore, a meeting on the "External dimension of migration management – Tools for regular pathways" was held in Athens, with participants from ministries, civil society and international organisations.

On 18 July 2024, Ireland joined as ICMPD's 21st Member State. Ireland's long-standing collaboration with ICMPD and recent accession to the Member States' circle will further contribute to the Organisation's ability to respond jointly and effectively to

opportunities and challenges of migration and support the common work towards improved migration governance.

FOSTERING STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

Reaffirming its commitment to fostering strong partnerships, ICMPD organised numerous high-level missions and meetings with officials from Member States, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Germany, Portugal, and Sweden, as well as with ICMPD's partner countries. Engagements with strategic partners, including the United Nations and international organisations, civil society, NGOs, academia, and parliaments, remained throughout the year as well.

At the institutional level, ICMPD organised meetings of its governing bodies including ICMPD's Advisory Board, which comprises leading migration experts. The Advisory Board provides guidance and information to the Director General and ICMPD's senior management team on advancing the Organisation's role and exploring migration prospects for 2025. Furthermore, the Committee on Programming Coordination explored operational opportunities for collaboration in line with ICMPD's strategy and Member States' priorities. The Steering Group, ICMPD's highest decision-making body, comprises the Organisation's Member States and convenes twice annually. In 2024, Steering Group meetings were held in Athens and Vienna, both chaired by Greece as the Steering Group Chair for that year.

2025 will be a pivotal year for ICMPD, marked by the election of a new Director General and the approval of a new five-year strategy. Member States have been actively preparing for these key milestones throughout the year.

VIENNA MIGRATION CONFERENCE

VIENNA MIGRATION CONFERENCE 2024

Europe's leading forum on migration

The ninth Vienna Migration Conference (VMC2024) reaffirmed its status as Europe's leading forum for migration policy discussions. Against the backdrop of geopolitical instability and a year of pivotal global elections, the conference brought together key policymakers, migration experts and stakeholders to address emerging challenges and explore strategies for effective migration governance.

With migration at the forefront of political agendas and public debate across Europe and beyond, VMC2024 emphasised the need for balanced and sustainable policies. Discussions focused on key issues, including migration diplomacy, labour mobility, route-based approach to managing mixed movements, public perceptions of migration, and the implementation of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum. The event underscored that effective migration governance requires cross-border collaboration and multisectoral cooperation.

The conference also highlighted Europe's dual challenge of strengthening migration control while maintaining openness to talent and humanitarian protection. In the words of Ivan Krastev, Permanent Fellow of the Institute for Human Sciences, "in the absence of migration, Europe's social and economic models cannot be sustained", hence the need for policies that balance security with economic and demographic realities.

As migration remains a central political and societal issue, VMC2024 reinforced the importance of cooperation, innovation, and policy coherence at both national and international levels. Through this conference, ICMPD has reaffirmed its commitment to provide a trusted platform for dialogue that fosters the exchange of diverse perspectives to shape practical and forward-looking migration solutions in an era of shifting global dynamics.
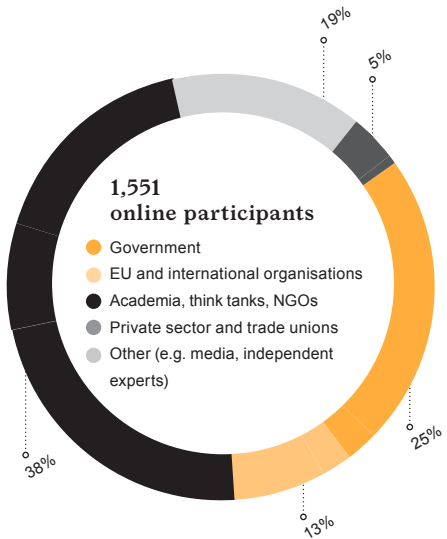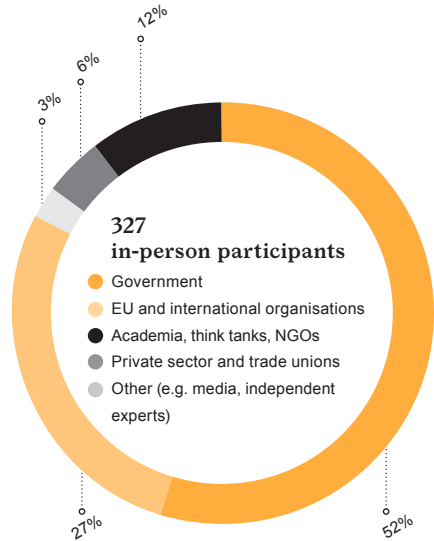
For more information, visit www.vienna-migration-conference.org.

Programme

15	sessions, all live-streamed
32	panellists
11	moderators

Event engagement

1,892	Slido participants
4	audience polls
1,033	votes by 598 participants

327 in-person participants

- Government
- EU and international organisations
- Academia, think tanks, NGOs
- Private sector and trade unions
- Other (e.g. media, independent experts)

12% · 6% · 3% · 27% · 52%

1,551 online participants

- Government
- EU and international organisations
- Academia, think tanks, NGOs
- Private sector and trade unions
- Other (e.g. media, independent experts)

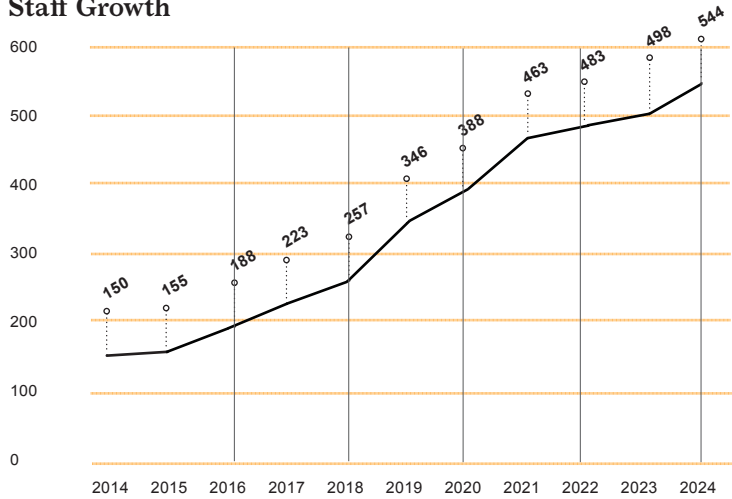19% · 5% · 25% · 13% · 38%

HUMAN RESOURCES

WHO WE ARE

Over the last year, ICMPD has seen a continuation of its growth by *9%* with a significant expansion in its workforce, currently numbering *544 employees*. Staff at ICMPD are internationally diversified, comprising 74 nationalities working in *31 duty stations* across the globe.

The representation of women in professional roles within ICMPD is impressively strong, with 61% of such positions held by female employees. ICMPD's expanding profile enhances its attractiveness as an employer of highly qualified professionals with expert knowledge and insight into the migration field. Indeed, the organisation has established itself as an employer of choice for those embarking on a career in migration policy, which is clearly reflected in the broad range of expertise of its staff.
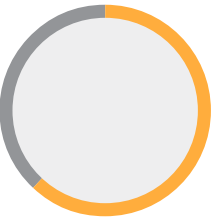
Working at ICMPD promises exposure to cutting-edge concepts, a diverse variety of stakeholders and partners in multiple national and international contexts, as well as unparalleled opportunities for learning. The evolving nature of the organisation and its work provides the necessary dynamism for the development of new approaches and the foundation of new partnerships.
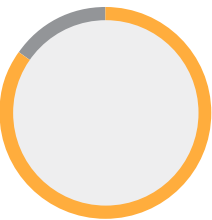
Gender Ratio
334 FEMALE
210 MALE

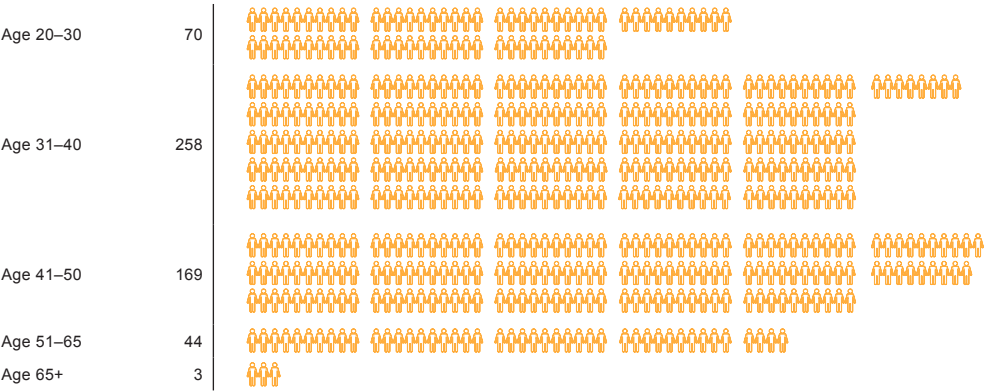## Total Staff
544 EMPLOYEES
131 NEW EMPLOYEES IN 2024

Staff Growth

Year	Staff
2014	150
2015	155
2016	188
2017	223
2018	257
2019	346
2020	388
2021	463
2022	483
2023	498
2024	544

Age Profile
Average age: 39

Age	Count
Age 20–30	70
Age 31–40	258
Age 41–50	169
Age 51–65	44
Age 65+	3

Nationalities

74 different nationalities working together

Nationality	Count	Nationality	Count	Nationality	Count
Afghanistan	3	Hungary	2	Poland	3
Algeria	1	India	6	Romania	6
Argentina	1	Iraq	17	Russia	1
Armenia	11	Ireland	2	Senegal	1
Austria	38	Italy	25	Serbia	5
				Sierra Leone	1
				Slovakia	4
		Ivory Coast	2	Slovenia	2
Bangladesh	1	Jordan	8	South Africa	1
Belarus	1	Kazakhstan	3	Spain	4
Belgium	16	Kenya	3	Sri Lanka	1
				Sweden	4
Bosnia and Herzegovina	4	Kyrgyzstan	22	Switzerland	3
				Syria	3
Brazil	2	Latvia	2	Tajikistan	7
Bulgaria	1	Lebanon	15		
Cabo Verde	2			Tunisia	28
Canada	2	Libya	3		
Chile	1	Lithuania	2		
Colombia	1	Malta	1		
Czech Republic	3	Mexico	1	Türkiye	98
Denmark	1	Moldova	1		
Egypt	1	Montenegro	3		
Estonia	1	Morocco	2		
Finland	2	Netherlands	2		
France	13	New Zealand	1		
Georgia	12	Nigeria	27	Turkmenistan	2
Germany	14	North Macedonia	5	Ukraine	20
Ghana	4	Pakistan	26	United Kingdom	11
Greece	6	Peru	1	United States of America	7
Guatemala	1	Philippines	3	Uzbekistan	3

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT

Michael Spindelegger
Director General

Ralph Genetzke
Head of Brussels Mission

Sedef Dearing
Deputy Director General, Director of Migration
Dialogues & Cooperation

Malin Frankenhaeuser
Director Policy, Research & Strategy

John Aguirre
Director Management

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The financial report of ICMPD is prepared in accordance with the rules governing the financial framework of the organisation and the relevant decisions taken by the Steering Group. The report is prepared in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles and the International Public Sector Accounting Standards. The 2024 consolidated budget (Regular and Programme Budget) amounted to €101.4 million, and total assets to €171.4 million. The budget was financed by membership contributions from the Member States, other revenue, and to a larger extent by donor contributions for project resources. The consolidated budget includes two parts: the Regular Budget, which finances administrative costs including management and infrastructure expenses, and the Programme Budget, which includes earmarked resources for project implementation, specific programmes for Member States and support functions.
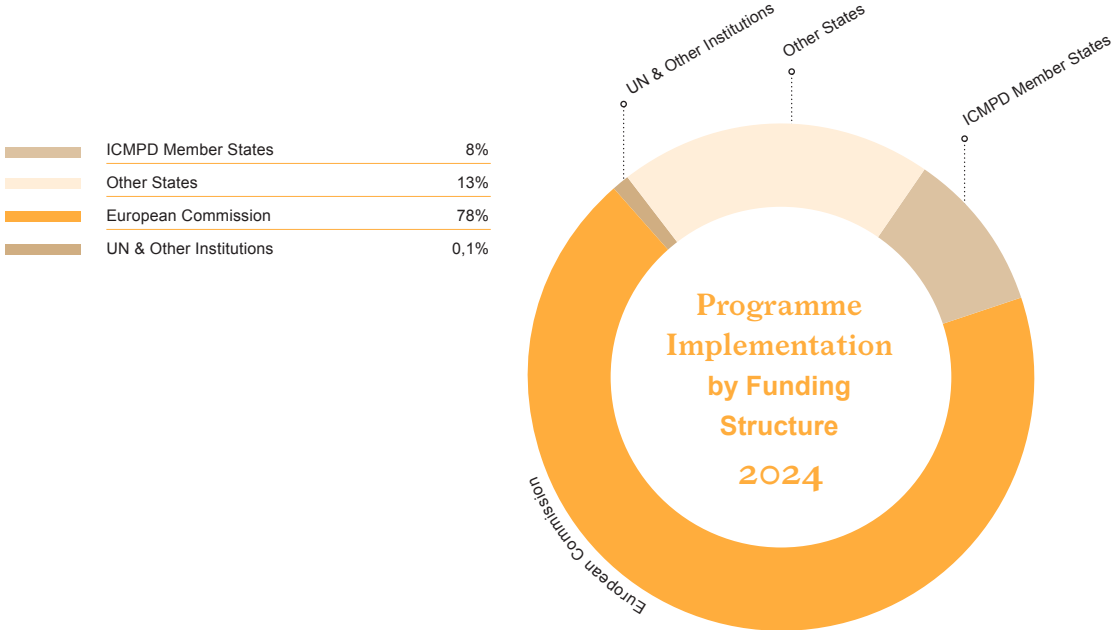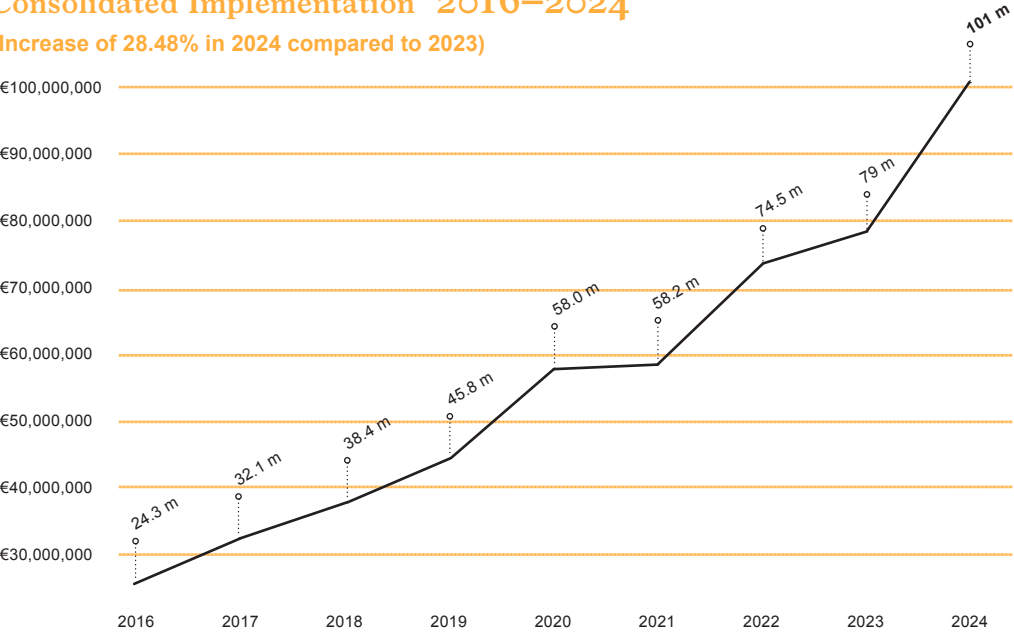
Consolidated Implementation of Resources 2024
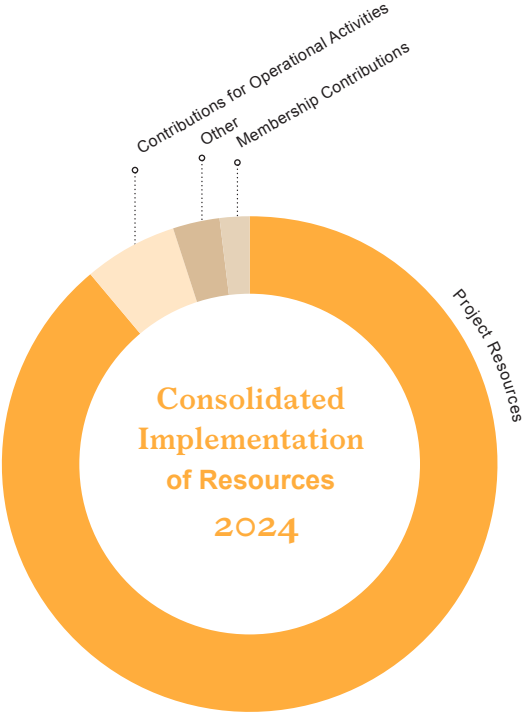
Membership Contributions	€1,955,641
Other	€2,523,589
Contributions for Operational Activities	€6,138,735
Project Resources	€90,852,262
TOTAL REVENUE	**€101,470,227**

Programme Implementation by Geographic Region 2024
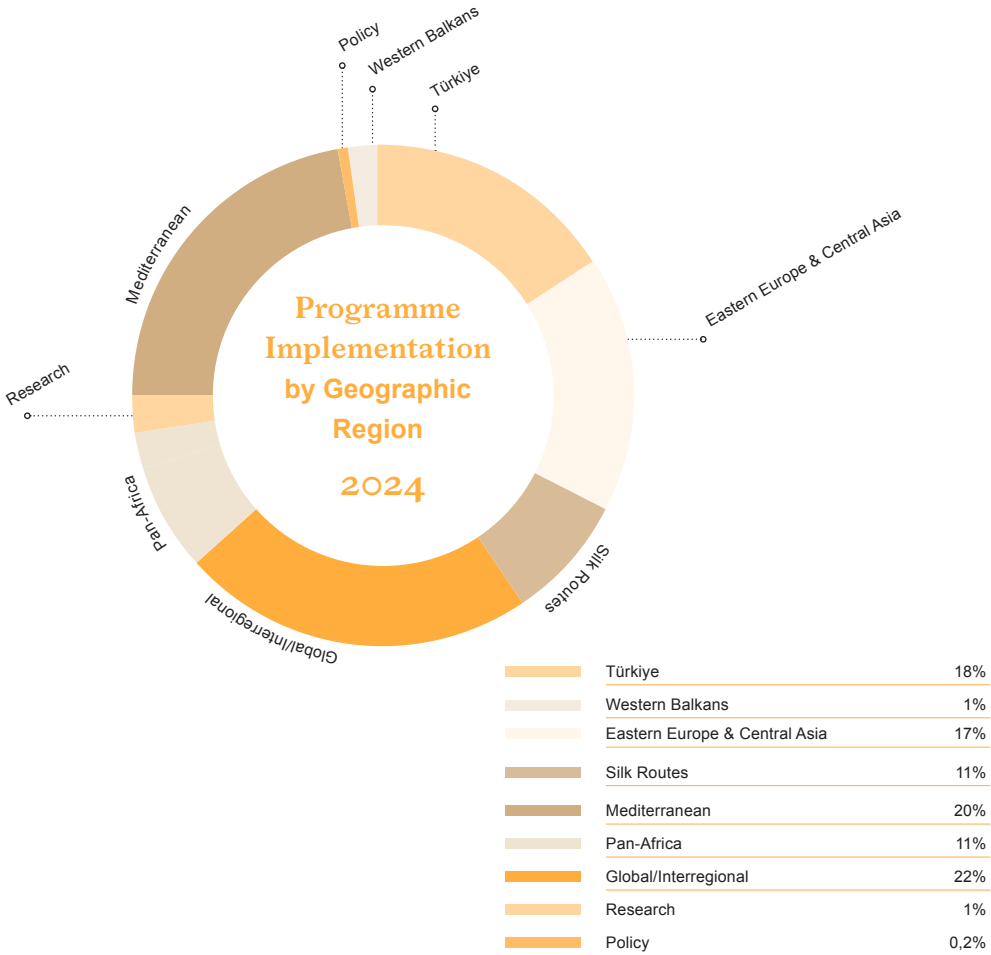
Türkiye	18%
Western Balkans	1%
Eastern Europe & Central Asia	17%
Silk Routes	11%
Mediterranean	20%
Pan-Africa	11%
Global/Interregional	22%
Research	1%
Policy	0,2%

Consolidated Implementation 2016–2024
(Increase of 28.48% in 2024 compared to 2023)

- 2016: 24.3 m
- 2017: 32.1 m
- 2018: 38.4 m
- 2019: 45.8 m
- 2020: 58.0 m
- 2021: 58.2 m
- 2022: 74.5 m
- 2023: 79 m
- 2024: 101 m

Programme Implementation by Funding Structure 2024

ICMPD Member States	8%
Other States	13%
European Commission	78%
UN & Other Institutions	0,1%