

# EMN AUSTRIA NATIONAL CONFERENCE REPORT 2024



UNLEASHING THE POTENTIAL  
OF MIGRATION PARTNERSHIPS:

TOWARDS A COMPREHENSIVE  
APPROACH

18 NOVEMBER 2024

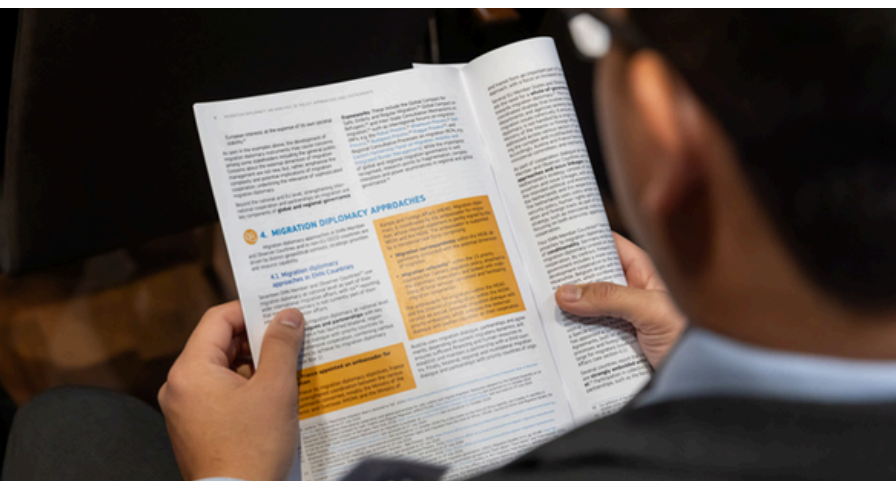


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# CONFERENCE BACKGROUND & OBJECTIVES



Migration governance requires dealing with the complexity of migration, considering how migration is shaped by a multitude of factors, and is affecting migrants, origin, transit and destination countries. Cooperation among States is consequently essential in this area, and external cooperation has been a policy priority for the EU and beyond.

In light of the relevance of international cooperation, the conference engaged with the question of how to maximize the benefits of migration partnerships. What makes migration partnerships successful? What are its challenges? What impact can be expected from migration partnerships?



The conference was based on the EMN's ongoing work engaging with international cooperation including the EMN-OECD inform “Migration Diplomacy: An Analysis of Policy Approaches and Instruments”.

**18.11.24**

Date

**FLEMINGS SELECTION HOTEL  
WIEN-CITY, JOSEFSTÄDTER STR.  
10-12, 1080 VIENNA, AUSTRIA**

Venue

**110**

Participants

# THE PANELISTS

**DISCOVER COMPREHENSIVE BIOGRAPHIES OF ALL  
MODERATORS AND PANELISTS HERE:**

**[HTTPS://WWW.EMN.AT/WP-CONTENT/UPLOADS/2024/12/SPEAKER-BIOS.PDF](https://www.emn.at/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/speaker-bios.pdf)**

# OPENING REMARKS

**MARIAN BENBOW PFISTERER**  
CHIEF OF MISSION  
IOM COUNTRY OFFICE FOR AUSTRIA

**PETER WEBINGER**  
DIRECTOR-GENERAL FOR MIGRATION AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS  
AUSTRIAN FEDERAL MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR

# OPENING REMARKS

## KEY MESSAGES

- IOM Austria is delighted to organize this year's EMN Austria national conference in partnership with the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior.
- IOM believes that in order to seize the opportunities and face the challenges of migration in an increasingly interdependent and complex world, while supporting the world's most vulnerable populations, we must act in partnership with others.
- Partnerships are an essential building block for IOM to achieve its three Strategic objectives that have been laid out in the [Strategic plan 2024 – 2028](#). Governments, the private sector, other international organizations, academia, civil society and, of course, migrants and their communities are all important actors and partners.
- Current and future international cooperation on migration can only benefit from dialogue and the sharing of knowledge and experiences; and today's conference aims to facilitate partnerships by providing information, exchanging ideas, learning from each other and creating an evidence-base for decision-making and action.
- The EMN mission is to provide up-to-date, objective, reliable and comparable information on migration and asylum. Providing this information, the EMN aims to support policymaking in the European Union and to inform the public.
- The EMN's new inform, "[Migration diplomacy: An analysis of policy approaches and instruments](#)," provides insights from 23 EMN Member and Observer Countries, alongside examples from OECD countries outside the EU. Key findings highlight that migration diplomacy is a critical element of international affairs, often utilizing bilateral agreements and cross-sectoral approaches that link migration priorities with other policy areas like development aid or trade. The report underscores the importance of effective coordination, sustainable solutions, and improved evaluation methods for successful migration diplomacy.



**MARIAN BENBOW  
PFISTERER**

**Chief of Mission,  
IOM Austria**

# OPENING REMARKS

## KEY MESSAGES

- Successful migration partnerships depend on two key factors: trust and participation.
- Trust is essential for cooperation, which requires time, empathy, and understanding of the partner's perspective, rather than just pursuing one's own self-interests.
- Participation, the involvement of stakeholders, is also vital for fruitful cooperation. Engaging stakeholders in policy processes strengthens systems.
- We have a dysfunctional protection system, as it stems from a pre-globalized area, which is not adequate anymore. Today we should allocate resources to support people in their respective regions, rather than focusing on those few who reach Europe to seek protection.



**PETER WEBINGER**

Director-General for Migration and  
International Affairs,  
Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior

# KEYNOTE

## THE IMPORTANCE OF COMPREHENSIVE APPROACHES TO MIGRATION PARTNERSHIPS

**PHILIPPE LECLERC**

**DIRECTOR OF THE REGIONAL BUREAU FOR EUROPE  
UNHCR**

# THE IMPORTANCE OF COMPREHENSIVE APPROACHES TO MIGRATION PARTNERSHIPS

## KEY MESSAGES

- We continue to see the largest refugee displacement, be it in Africa, in the Middle East, or in Asia. We need trust to implement sustainable solutions. Currently we hear there is lack of trust. The confidence of the public in EU Member States in asylum systems has been eroding, which is harmful for democracy.
- It is important that States are addressing the root causes of displacement, so that alternatives to dangerous movements, which now exists because of a lack of solutions, are offered; and trust in the refugee system is strengthened.
- My organization - UNHCR - has the mandate to protect refugees and stands ready to respond to these crises and to support durable solutions based on trustful relationships. Together with IOM we developed the route-based approach.
- The route-based approach proposes a set of comprehensive, targeted and coordinated interventions by States, international organizations, civil society partners, migrant and refugee organizations and other stakeholders, along main routes in countries of origin, transit and destination, to ensure international protection and solutions for refugees, while upholding rights and creating opportunities for migrants.
- There are ways by which legal pathways can be worked on, and resettlement and complementary pathways can be developed and replicated so that alternatives to these dangerous movements can be offered.



**PHILIPPE LECLERC**

Director of the Regional  
Bureau for Europe,  
UNHCR

# PANEL I

## MIGRATION DIPLOMACY - HOW TO BUILD STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

### MODERATOR

**SANDRA LAVENEX**

PROFESSOR OF EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL POLITICS  
UNIVERSITY OF GENEVA

### PANELISTS

**PETER WEBINGER**

DIRECTOR-GENERAL FOR MIGRATION  
AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS,  
AUSTRIAN FEDERAL MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR

**LINDSAY JENKINS**

SENIOR ADVISOR,  
BUREAU OF POPULATION REFUGEES, AND MIGRATION,  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

**JOHANNES LUCHNER**

DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR HORIZONTAL AFFAIRS  
AND MIGRATION,  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MIGRATION AND HOME AFFAIRS,  
EUROPEAN COMMISSION

**CATHERINE NORTHING**

HEAD OF INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS DIVISION,  
OFFICE OF PARTNERSHIPS, ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATION,  
IOM

# MIGRATION DIPLOMACY - HOW TO BUILD STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

The panel discussed diplomatic approaches and instruments for establishing Migration Partnerships. Drawing from their experiences, the panellists examined the advantages and challenges of these partnerships and offered insights on factors which make them successful.

Moderator Sandra Lavenex (University of Geneva) introduced the panel by highlighting the following points:

- States used to think of migration as a matter of sovereignty. This has changed and is expressed in international documents acknowledging the need for international comprehensive cooperation.
- The European Commission already called for a comprehensive approach in migration cooperation with countries of origin and transit of migrants in the early 1990s. Today, the question is not whether one should cooperate but how to realise a comprehensive and balanced approach.
- We see cooperation on three levels: 1) Multilateral 2) Regional 3) National via bilateral partnerships. A key question is, how national approaches interlink with regional and multilateral approaches.



**SANDRA LAVENEX**  
Professor of European and  
International Politics,  
University of Geneva

# MIGRATION DIPLOMACY - HOW TO BUILD STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

## KEY MESSAGES

- Successful migration management in the EU relies on well-developed national systems, an effective border control system (including asylum and return), and a strong external dimension from a European perspective.
- Austria's objective is to build a fair, humane migration system, emphasizing partnerships and international cooperation to ensure orderly migration and avoid irregular migration incentives.
- Preconditions for effective partnerships include a clear political mandate, functioning national structures and mutual trust.
- While Austria supports common EU agreements, bilateral agreements often allow greater flexibility, as seen in our successful cooperation with Morocco.
- To strengthen a comprehensive approach in migration cooperation and to set priorities in a holistic manner, Austria established a 'whole-of-government' steering group.
- Although significant progress in the external dimension and migration diplomacy has been made, more efforts and resources are necessary to effectuate a substantial change in migration policy.



**PETER WEBINGER**

Director-General for Migration and  
International Affairs,  
Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior

# MIGRATION DIPLOMACY - HOW TO BUILD STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

## KEY MESSAGES

- The EU's approach to comprehensive partnerships ensures that migration is embedded with other priorities in bilateral relations and reflect the needs of the partner country concerned. The Memorandum of Understanding with Tunisia (July 2023) and the Strategic and Comprehensive Partnership with Egypt (March 2024) are examples of how migration cooperation is embedded in supporting macroeconomic development, key national-specific sectors, energy and trade, creation of jobs and other support measures. In cases in which the focus on migration cooperation is more prominent, as is the case with the Joint Declaration with Mauritania (March 2024), the EU is also supporting key interests of the partner country that come up in negotiations, such as job creation and social cohesion, supporting key sectors such as green hydrogen, and humanitarian assistance.
- There is no one size fits all approach: a political dialogue and negotiations with different stakeholders are key to ensure tailor-made, impact-driven outcomes. This ensures shared responsibility and ownership on both ends of the partnership.
- The external dimension is also a fundamental pillar of the [Pact on Migration and Asylum](#). Our efforts will rely on strong coordination between the different portfolios tasked with work on the external dimension, and continued dialogue with partner countries.



### **JOHANNES LUCHNER**

**Deputy Director General for  
Horizontal Affairs and Migration,  
Directorate-General for  
Migration and Home Affairs,  
European Commission**

# MIGRATION DIPLOMACY - HOW TO BUILD STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

## KEY MESSAGES

- The challenges and opportunities that we face in regard to people on the move for a variety of reasons are a reality. They are challenges on a domestic, regional and global level. In addition to reflecting on challenges, we must also recognize the opportunities in migration and refugee response and management, including entrepreneurship, economic development and growth, building coalitions, reaffirming humanitarian and democratic values.
- No one country and no one policy can meet this moment alone. A deeply rewarding and successful example from our hemisphere is the Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection, which sets out a comprehensive, hemisphere-wide approach to addressing irregular migration and forced displacement.
- The Declaration is a non-binding, collaborative framework, bringing countries together around an agreed set of principles that we have sought to turn into actions. The Declaration gives incentive to innovate and act together.
- Through this hemispheric approach, the United States and 21 other countries have driven innovative and impactful actions to 1) help refugees and migrants find protection and stability close to home and empower them as agents of prosperity alongside their new communities, 2) counter smuggling and trafficking and humanely enforce our borders, and 3) make lawful and orderly protection and migration pathways a meaningful alternative to irregular migration. All three components address the drivers of irregular migration and displacement.
- Another key U.S. innovation is the Safe Mobility initiative, which focuses on making local integration in host countries and lawful migration and protection pathways more accessible to migrants and refugees in the region. This presents a meaningful alternative to irregular migration and helps counter migrant smuggling and human trafficking in the Western Hemisphere. We are looking at how the Safe Mobility Initiative may be able to support labor mobility in the future.
- Partnerships are essential to our work – not only with countries, but also international organizations, MDBs, civil society, and private sector. But partnerships are only words and concepts if we do not deliver meaningful action.



### LINDSAY JENKINS

Senior Advisor,  
Bureau of Population, Refugees, and  
Migration,  
U.S. Department of State

# MIGRATION DIPLOMACY - HOW TO BUILD STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

## KEY MESSAGES

- At IOM we believe in the need to develop partnerships for the benefit of all, that allow safe migration and provide opportunities for countries of origin and destination.
- Regional consultative processes on migration are contributing to common approaches through information-sharing and policy dialogues.
- Not only a whole-of government but also a whole-of society approach is necessary: to bring in the perspective of communities and migrants themselves and their countries. We also need to bring in voices of local and municipal governments, civil society and all others who are working in this area.
- We need to harness the contribution of the diaspora communities in regard to their connection that they have with the country of origins, their knowledge and other resources diaspora communities possess.



**CATHERINE  
NORTHING**

Head of International Partnerships Division,  
Office of Partnerships, Advocacy and  
Communication,  
IOM

# PANEL II

## MIGRATION PARTNERSHIPS IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBAL, MULTI-FACETTED CHALLENGES

### MODERATOR

**PHILIP SCHMIDT**

HEAD OF UNIT FOR INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION COMMUNICATION AND RESEARCH,  
AUSTRIAN FEDERAL MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR

### PANELISTS

**LYNDER NKURANGA**

DIRECTOR GENERAL OF IMMIGRATION  
AND EMIGRATION,  
RWANDA

**GRITH SACHA NØRGAARD**

DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL  
MIGRATION,  
MINISTRY OF INTEGRATION AND  
IMMIGRATION,  
DENMARK

**DANIEL THYM**

PROFESSOR OF PUBLIC LAW EUROPEAN  
AND INTERNATIONAL LAW,  
UNIVERSITY OF KONSTANZ

**SOUADOU N'DIAYE**

TECHNICAL ADVISOR FOR MIGRATION  
AND REFUGEES,  
MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR,  
MAURITANIA

**EMILIE WIINBLAD MATHEZ**

SENIOR PROTECTION COORDINATOR,  
DIVISION OF INTERNATIONAL  
PROTECTION, POLICY AND LAW SERVICE,  
UNHCR

# MIGRATION PARTNERSHIPS IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBAL, MULTI-FACETTED CHALLENGES

This panel discussed new ideas on how migration partnerships can sustainably address migration by leveraging its potential and managing associated challenges. A particular focus was given to innovative solutions addressing irregular migration.

The introduction by moderator Philip Schmidt (Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior) highlighted the following points:

- Addressing deficiencies in protection systems requires coordinated and comprehensive approaches.
- Efforts must shift from managing irregular migration within Europe to find durable solutions in origin regions, focusing on prevention, alternatives and orderly migration.
- There is a need to look at new ways: Challenges cannot be solved by one-size-fits-all solutions, many solutions are necessary and we need to build up innovative partnerships.
- Comprehensive packages, such as the EU-Türkiye statement's with its 1-1 mechanism (for every irregular migrant returned, one refugee resettled) and its manifold aid in the region, offer valuable models for future solutions.
- Strong, mutually beneficial and broad partnerships with countries along migratory routes and international organizations are critical for sustainable and innovative solutions.



**PHILIP SCHMIDT**

Head of Unit for International Migration  
Communication and Research,  
Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior

# MIGRATION PARTNERSHIPS IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBAL, MULTI-FACETTED CHALLENGES

## KEY MESSAGES

- There is an urgency for transformative migration reform: The current migration system is undeniably broken—marked by policy gaps, outdated frameworks, and a lack of cohesive international cooperation. It is time for bold, transformative action.
- We must expand legal pathways and implement initiatives that benefit both host countries and migrant communities, moving from crisis management to sustainable solutions.
- Rwanda’s approach to migration and asylum is grounded in empathy, shaped by our own history. As a nation that endured decades of mass migration and the profound challenges of resettlement, we understand firsthand the importance of humane, rights-centered policies. This empathy drives our commitment to treating migrants and refugees with dignity, and to sharing what we’ve learned with others facing similar challenges
- Rwanda has been at a fore front of refugee protection on the international scene with initiatives such as the Emergency Transit Mechanism, in collaboration with the African Union and UNHCR, that provides life-saving protection, assistance and long term solution to extremely vulnerable refugees trapped in detention in Libya, through temporary evacuation to Rwanda. Additionally, through agreements with different European partners we provide legal alternatives to irregular migration, disrupting smuggling networks and enhancing security.



**LYNDER NKURANGA**

Director General of Immigration  
and Emigration,  
Rwanda

# MIGRATION PARTNERSHIPS IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBAL, MULTI-FACETTED CHALLENGES

## KEY MESSAGES

- When we talk about external policies, it is very important to also talk about internal policies to be put in place. It is very important to have a holistic approach, looking at both, internal and external affairs.
- Mauritania has an important partnership with Spain, for example, but there is also need for actions on a regional, African level as migration is mostly regional. In fact, only a small fraction of migrants from Africa moves to Europe.
- However, many people have been transiting from the coast of Mauritania to the Canary Islands. This has been the main motivation to work together with the EU. Mauritania is a transit country, which can lead to challenging situations.
- Mauritania had to find new ways to effectively manage the border, which implied redefining its strategy, working with civil society and focusing on the rights of migrants as an important aspect. In the course of this process, work with and across different stakeholder groups started.
- The new agreement with the EU exhibits a multiple portfolio approach, including economic development and alternative solutions regarding mobility.



**SOUADOU N'DIAYE**

Advisor for Migration and Refugees,  
Ministry of the Interior,  
Mauritania

# MIGRATION PARTNERSHIPS IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBAL, MULTI-FACETTED CHALLENGES

## KEY MESSAGES

- Denmark is working to develop new solutions for addressing irregular migration in a EU track. Also, pleased to see that migration is at the very top of agenda in European Council. We now have strong language on the need to find new solutions to address irregular migration. Clear that a majority of EU countries supports that we explore and find new solutions.
- Denmark spearheaded efforts of 15 EU Member States sending a joint letter on this to the Commission on 15 May 2024 on new solutions. New commissioner for home and migration will steer reflections further on this matter.
- Focus of new solutions among others: Idea of return hubs, where third country nationals without a legal right to stay in EU and who will not collaborate on their return could be placed temporarily until their return to country of origin. Models on safe third country for asylum processing outside the EU. A place of safety model; the idea of migrants rescued at sea would be taken to safe locations for asylum processing (the Italy –Albania protocol serving as an example).
- Denmark fully supports the EU's efforts regarding the implementation of the Pact and Migration and Asylum as well as the external dimension of migration and is pursuing complementary solutions that go hand in hand with these efforts. It is important to consider the interests of partner countries in these efforts and offer comprehensive partnerships.
- Important to invest along migratory routes. For this purpose, Denmark has dedicated migration funds aimed to ensure capacity development in the areas of migration management (including integrated border management), asylum systems and processing, countering migrant smuggling and trafficking, and through livelihoods activities to support
- Crucial to spend required time on setting up and designing proper legal frameworks in line with international obligations and EU obligations. Under scrutiny of courts in Strasbourg and Luxembourg that expectedly will interpret any arrangements that we will pursue.
- One new solution is not enough, need for exploring more than one pilots projects in several areas.



**GRITH SACHA  
NØRGAARD**

Director of International Migration,  
Ministry of Integration and Immigration,  
Denmark

# MIGRATION PARTNERSHIPS IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBAL, MULTI-FACETTED CHALLENGES

## KEY MESSAGES

- Mixed movement of refugees and migrants take place in a complex displacement context and pose challenges to States and people moving in all countries along the routes. A different approach is needed as we are currently failing to manage mixed movements. While migrants and refugees face similar vulnerabilities and risks along the way - the rights of, and solutions for, refugees and migrants are distinct.
- UNHCR has developed a framework with IOM, the route-based approach, promoting comprehensive action, in all countries, to save lives and ease suffering, to provide alternatives to dangerous journeys early.
- This approach seeks to reconcile the sovereignty and legitimate interests of States with the rights of refugees and migrants under international, regional and national law, and aims to support States to develop rights-based and lawful approaches to mixed movements. This includes strengthened asylum systems and migration management, as well as safe and dignified return and readmission. We must think outside the box, but not outside the law, to address these challenges.
- Action needs to be comprehensive and taken along the entire route as a focus on border controls is often too late and too narrow to be effective. Partnerships that relate to mixed movements should also include components that strengthen access to protection for refugees and asylum-seekers all along the route.



**EMILIE WIINBLAD  
MATHEZ**

Senior Protection Coordinator,  
Division of International Protection,  
Policy and Law Service,  
UNHCR

# MIGRATION PARTNERSHIPS IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBAL, MULTI-FACETTED CHALLENGES

## KEY MESSAGES

- The European asylum system is contributing to negative externalities in terms of deaths in the Mediterranean, many young men among asylum applicants, practical irrelevance of return decisions, a perception of 'loss of controls' among the population, and the absence of meaningful legal pathways for vulnerable groups. Against that background, it is legitimate – even necessary – to think outside the box.
- 'Innovative solutions' should not be discarded but integrated into a holistic outlook; the objective should be 'responsibility sharing' rather than 'responsibility shifting'.
- Such a solution would have to combine legal pathways, both for refugees and workers, with new ideas how to respond to mixed movement along the main migratory routes.
- Success of such a venture would prevent the public discourse from following a negative trajectory, in which the right to asylum continues to be undermined.



**DANIEL THYM**

Professor of Public Law, European and International Law,  
University of Konstanz

# PANEL III

## NEW FRAMEWORKS FOR LEGAL MIGRATION PATHWAYS

### MODERATOR

#### MARINA MANKE

CHIEF OF GLOBAL MIGRATION DATA ANALYSIS CENTRE (GMDAC), GLOBAL DATA INSTITUTE,  
IOM

### PANELISTS

#### SHADRACK MWANGOLO MWADIME

PRINCIPAL SECRETARY OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR  
AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT,  
MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL PROTECTION,  
REPUBLIC OF KENYA

#### MARGIT KREUZHUBER

HEAD OF WORK IN AUSTRIA,  
AUSTRIAN BUSINESS AGENCY

#### MAXIMILIAN BUCHLEITNER

HEAD INTERNATIONALE FACHKRÄFTE-OFFENSIVE (IFO),  
AUSTRIAN FEDERAL ECONOMIC CHAMBER

# NEW FRAMEWORKS FOR LEGAL MIGRATION PATHWAYS

## KEY MESSAGES

This panel looked at the intersection of Migration Partnerships and labour migration, reflecting on new frameworks for regular migration pathways like EU Talent Partnerships, Skills Mobility Partnerships and Bilateral Labour Migration Agreements.

Topics discussed included addressing labour shortages, enhancing skills development, and strategies for supporting the mobility of talent from the perspective of both country of origin and country of destination.

- Moderator Marina Manke (IOM) steered the discussion by pointing out to key global instruments and initiatives that have been developed in the field of labour migration in recent years and that can support States as they work to harness the full potential of labour migration, including the Skills Mobility Partnership (SMP) methodology; training for governments how to set up SMPs; the IRIS Standard for Ethical Recruitment, and the bilateral labour agreement guidelines developed with the support of the UN Network of Migration under the steering of IOM and ILO.
- A particular attention was paid to the importance of developing evidence based solutions on the basis of timely and comprehensive data and statistics disaggregated by sex, country of origin/destination, industry and skill levels.



### **MARINA MANKE**

Chief of Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC), Global Data Institute, IOM

# NEW FRAMEWORKS FOR LEGAL MIGRATION PATHWAYS

## KEY MESSAGES

- Kenya wants migration to take place in a structured and regular way to ensure maximum benefits. It advocates transparency about advantages for sending and receiving societies in partnerships: Sending states with a youthful population, want to bring up people the economic ladder, and address unemployment. For sending countries getting the know-how through partnerships and sending population abroad is an advantage for their labour markets, Europe's advantage is to process labour migration in a regular way, that is of benefit for the receiving societies.
- Kenya advocates not migration but labour mobility, that is migration to Europe for three to five years, with migrants coming back to bring back resources and know-how to Africa.
- The department for Labour and Skills Development is scanning the international labour market, to understand the demand, in order to match demand and supply. The scanning results feed into curricula, so people are geared towards a special career that is usable at the international labour markets.
- Supported by IOM, Kenya introduced IRIS to recruitment agencies operating in the country and opened itself for recruitment agencies from abroad.



**SHADRACK MWANGOLO  
MWADIME**

**Principal Secretary of the State Department  
of Labour and Skills Development,  
Ministry of Labour and Social Protection,  
Republic of Kenya**

# NEW FRAMEWORKS FOR LEGAL MIGRATION PATHWAYS

## KEY MESSAGES

- Austria faces declining demographics and a shortage of skilled workers. By 2040, the workforce is expected to decrease by 262,000, with 110 professions already on the shortage list in 2024. Competing with other countries, concluding migration partnerships is key for Austria with skilled migration being framed as a business case.
- Austria's current approach to attracting international skilled labor is relatively new, evolving from limiting legislation for third-country recruitment. Stakeholder alignment had to be improved and public administration capacities had to be built, e.g. to assess qualifications in a scalable way.
- Austria developed a pre-check database system pioneered with the Philippines, which established scalability in terms of qualifications. The next step is to roll out the national brand “Your Future Made in Austria” to improve visibility and the skilled worker’s customer journey.
- International recruitment needs to be sustainable and create a win-win situation for all sides. Ideally, it should adhere to certain standards like the IRIS system of IOM to build trustworthy, sustainable relations.



**MAXIMILIAN  
BUCHLEITNER**

Head of International Recruiting  
Initiative (IFO),  
Austrian Federal Economic Chamber  
(WKÖ)

# NEW FRAMEWORKS FOR LEGAL MIGRATION PATHWAYS

## KEY MESSAGES

- Migration partnerships are increasingly important, with regular exchange being crucial for building trust.
- Well-managed labour migration benefits everyone involved: international talent, employers, destination countries, and countries of origin. Migration partnerships play an important role in this context by defining activities and priorities and setting framework conditions.
- Austria offers international talent immigration opportunities through the Red-White-Red Card. WORK in AUSTRIA assists talents and their family members during the immigration process and provides information about living and working in Austria. We want that people are well informed and get support and we should not forget about the importance of family members in the immigration process.



**MARGIT  
KREUZHUBER**

Head of WORK in AUSTRIA,  
Austrian Business Agency

# FINAL REMARKS

**FRANZISKA KANDOLF**

**DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR MIGRATION AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

**AUSTRIAN FEDERAL MINISTRY OF INTERIOR**

# FINAL REMARKS

## KEY MESSAGES

- As challenges grow, governments must show they can **exercise control** and protect the most vulnerable. This underscores the importance of well-functioning, long-term partnerships built on mutual trust.
- Migration partnerships are an essential component of our efforts in the field of international migration. Depending on the context, tailor made partnerships may include a broad array of topics from return cooperation to legal migration.
- Well-functioning partnerships are the cornerstone of a fair and humane protection system, benefiting both host societies and migrants.
- Innovative solutions such as transfer arrangements, return hubs and the route-based approach can be key components of effective migration partnerships.
- It's crucial to build on the current momentum in EU and international policy discussions and invest in long-term, trusted partnerships for sustainable migration management.



**FRANZISKA  
KANDOLF**

Deputy Director General for Migration  
and International Affairs,  
Austrian Federal Ministry of Interior

# THANK YOU!

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.



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[www.emn.at](http://www.emn.at)



The European Migration Network (EMN) is coordinated by the European Commission with National Contact Points established in each EU Member State (except Denmark) plus in EMN Observer Countries including Norway, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, Montenegro, Armenia, Serbia and North Macedonia. The National Contact Point Austria is financed by the European Commission and the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior.