EMN Austria National Conference 2026:

"The Future of Schengen: Governing beyond borders, strengthening stability within"

14 October 2026, Hilton Vienna Plaza, Schottenring 11, 1010 Vienna, Austria

08:45	***Doors open & welcome coffee***
09:15	***Opening remarks*** • Julia Hartlieb, Chief of Mission, IOM Country Office for Austria • Peter Webinger, Director-General for Migration and International Affairs, Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior
09:30	***Keynote: "An Area of Freedom, Security and Justice: Building Blocks for a Resilient Schengen Area"*** • Daniel Thym, Professor of Public Law, European and International Law at the University of Konstanz
10:00-10:20 – COFFEE BREAK	
Panel I: Schengen within the framework of the European migration architecture	
10:20	Content: The Schengen Area is characterized by a tension between national responsibility and joint European cooperation and solidarity, with internal border controls and emergency mechanisms providing only temporary stabilization. The panel discusses how the EU legal framework and governance structures can be improved to enable coherent decision-making and to enhance trust between Member States. Panel discussion: • Franziska Kandolf, Deputy Director-General for Migration and International Affairs, Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior • Olivier Onidi, Deputy Director General and Schengen Coordinator, European Commission • Raoul Ueberecken, Digital Transformation Officer (DTO), Council of the European Union • Nataša Kovář Chmelíčková, Head of Asylum Legislation Unit, Czech Republic Q&A with the audience
11:45-13:00 LUNCH BREAK	
Panel II: Integrated and technologically advanced external border protection: a new framework for new opportunities	
13:00	Content: The stability of the Schengen Area depends crucially on the effectiveness of its external borders and the interoperability of systems such as EES, ETIAS, EUROSUR and Eurodac. The panel discusses increased pressure on Member States at the external borders and the future mandate of Frontex, particularly regarding returns and crisis response. Panel discussion: • Representative of EU Member State (tbc) • Aija Kalnaja, Deputy Executive Director for Capabilities, FRONTEX • Vaidas Čypas, Head of International Cooperation Board, State Border Guard Service at the Ministry of the Interior, Republic of Lithuania • Henrik Ankerstjerne, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Immigration and Integration, Denmark Q&A with the audience
14:30-15:15 – COFFEE BREAK	

Panel III: Prevention instead of reaction: the external dimension of Schengen	
15:15	Content: Migration has a significant geopolitical dimension, and the debate on the future of Schengen in 2030 must incorporate cooperation with third countries as a key pillar, given current challenges of instrumentalization and hybrid threats. The panel discusses the role of a coherent visa policy and sustainable partnerships with third countries in the proactive management of migration. Panel discussion: • Tobias Molander, Special Representative for External Migration Policy and Director for Migration Affairs (EU and International), Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior • Georg Luke, Policy Assistant, Cabinet of Commissioner Magnus Bruner, European Commission • Representative of EU Member State (tbc) • n.n., IOM Q&A with the audience
16:45	***Final remarks*** • Philip Schmidt, Head of Migration Communication and Research Unit, Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior • Saskia Heilemann, Head of the Policy Research and Migration Law Unit, IOM Country Office for Austria (EMN Austria National Coordinator)
17:00	***End of the conference***

	Moderation • n.n., (tbc)

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Funded by the European Union
Federal Ministry Interior Republic of Austria
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