

## EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

This is the last issue of the Quarterly Review in 2021. Throughout the year, the Review covered a wide range of migration policies, dynamics, events and other issues informing our migration debates. Some concerned legislative amendments that will drive and define migration in the coming years. Others covered developments and trends across the Prague Process region and their possible implications. The Review also reported important milestones of the Prague Process: events and publications, the launch of the e-learning Platform and the first steps towards the Prague Process' new political mandate to be granted by the Ministerial Conference in October 2022.

In this issue, we focus on the most recent Prague Process events and outcomes, while also sharing a few messages on

migration that will remain largely valid in the future. What we observe today is a world that is increasingly dynamic, uncertain and complex. The mere complexity of ongoing developments, fuelled by the persisting coronavirus pandemic, can blur the vision and increase isolationist approaches within the migration policy landscape. In such challenging times, the best strategy might be to stay in touch and learn from each other. The Prague Process remains our joint platform for enduring cooperation and dialogue - in good and bad times.

We cannot but hope to greet you in person again in 2022. For now, we wish you a peaceful holiday season! Stay healthy and enjoy the read!

Sincerely,

Prague Process Secretariat

## Looking ahead: upcoming Prague Process activities in 2022

- 20 January** ● *Policy Talk 'Looking into 2022: What migration dynamics and policy developments to expect'*
- 27 January** ● *Policy Talk 'Labour Mobility Inside the EU and Beyond: Introducing the European Labour Authority'*
- Further online events envisaged for 2022:** ●
  - *'Refugee Status Determination'*
  - *'Introducing the EU Strategy for Voluntary Return and Reintegration'*
  - *'Maximizing labour migration outcomes in Prague Process corridors'*
  - *'A Rare Opportunity: Expanding Migration Pathways to Mitigate the Instrumentalisation of Irregular Migration by State Actors'*

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## First preparatory Senior Officials' Meeting for the 4th Prague Process Ministerial Conference

On 22 November 2021, the annual Prague Process Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) took place in an online format. Formally hosted by the Czech Republic in its capacity of Prague Process Chair, the SOM gathered officials from the Prague Process countries, the European Commission, the EU Council, EASO, Frontex, IOM and ICMPD. Participating states were invited to comment on the first drafts of the Ministerial Declaration and Action Plan, as well as to reflect on current migration challenges at national, regional and international levels.

This SOM was the first of three preparatory meetings for the fourth Prague Process Ministerial Conference in October 2022 under the Czech Presidency of the EU Council. It followed the inter-governmental consultations on the six thematic areas organised in May-June 2021. The draft Action Plan and Ministerial Declaration reflect the ideas collected during the consultations, proposing some new actions in each thematic area. During the SOM, the states widely supported these new actions as comprehensive and ambitious. Prior to

the second preparatory SOM in spring 2022, all participating states will receive the updated draft documents reflecting the inputs received.

The second session focused on current migration challenges looking in particular at the impact of COVID-19 and the volatile situation in Afghanistan on migration in the region. COVID-19 affected all states disrupting services, cross-border mobility and labour markets. It equally enhanced digitalisation and created the space for unprecedented legislative amendments regularising the stay of migrants with expired visas, permits and passports.

The situation in Afghanistan received diverging assessments: Whereas some states remain unaffected and expect no major flows from Afghanistan, others underlined the need to prepare for a potential influx by intensifying the work on border management, fighting irregular migration and related cross-border crimes. Given the unfolding humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, aid operations in the country and its neighbourhood

need to persist. Several EU states also shared their concerns over the developments at the EU border with Belarus.

The Prague Process Secretariat summarised the results and achievements of the past year, referring to the rich outputs of the Migration Observatory and Training Academy, including the newly launched e-Learning Platform. The upcoming year will equally feature a rich program with numerous activities, new e-courses, analytical publications and webinars.



## Prague Process Training Academy: Online Training on Return and Reintegration held in October



The aim of the training was to build knowledge on return and reintegration programs, thereby strengthening the capacities of state actors to understand, manage and put essential elements of return and reintegration into practice. Participants first received an overview of key concepts and terminology, before gaining insight into multi-level collaboration and an overview of existing policies and challenges. They were then guided through all the different stages of the return and reintegration process,

ranging from pre-departure counselling to monitoring and evaluating return and reintegration programs. The training highlighted elements that can lead to sustainable return, including information, decision-making and preparation for return. Finally, the training also addressed some important aspects for the day-to-day work of return advisors, allowing them to ask questions. The featured case studies and interactive exercises served as real examples of the subject matter.

## “Re-imagining migration partnerships”: Six Takeaways from the Vienna Migration Conference

On 19-20 October 2021, ICMPD organised the sixth edition of the Vienna Migration Conference, Europe’s leading forum on migration, addressing key developments such as the COVID-19 pandemic, developments in Afghanistan and Belarus, or the realities along the main migration routes. The main objective of this flagship event was to explore the challenges, opportunities and strategies for re-imagining and ultimately strengthening migration partnerships. Here are the six key takeaways on ‘Re-imagining migrations partnerships’:

### Migration partnerships are synonymous with foreign policy.

The internal and external dimensions of migration policy are inherently interconnected; yet finding the right expression for this in terms of diplomatic priorities can be complicated. Although migration management is usually entrusted to Ministries of Interior, their bargaining power is often limited. Foreign policy can and should play a greater role in forging partnerships. Better coordination and the use of foreign policy would enable the EU to make more compelling offers to its counterparts. Whereas foreign policy actors should empower migration partnerships, foreign policy should not be dependent on such cooperation to the exclusion of all else.

### Don’t forget the neighbours of your neighbours.

In supporting partnerships, Europe often focuses on its direct neighbourhood or on countries of origin. However, countries in between – those along the migration routes – are also important to engage. These gaps and realities need to be acknowledged via programming that supports neighbours in working with their neighbours so that ultimately people do not feel a need to migrate or can do so safely. Taking a whole-of-migration-routes approach follows a similar logic.

### To engage or not to engage?

Partnerships can be controversial. When potential partners are controversial, political leaders face a common challenge: Is it better to have no partnership or to enter into a controversial one? One case in point is whether to talk to the Taliban or not. Similarly, the instrumentalisation of migrants by Belarus brings the crisis outside the realm of migration management.

### Pave the way for public acceptance.

Public opinion on migration can be an impediment to migration cooperation and must be considered in the design of and narratives about partnership. For Europe’s partner countries, expanding legal pathways is key for justifying the cooperation to the public. A narrow focus on controversial issues such as return often leads to a deadlock. Meanwhile, focusing the narrative around common interests can create the political space needed for entering into and implementing joint initiatives. A common interest for all partners involved is controlled migration, but there should be an understanding that such control does not only mean discouraging irreg-

ular migration, but also providing legal pathways.

### Be a fair and foul weather friend.

Countries tend to redirect their attention and funds whenever they do not see an emergency. However, partnerships should be seen as a tool in both good and bad times. Migration partnerships should be reliable and long-term, both in times of stability and crisis. Instead of jumping from one crisis to another, partners should invest in enduring cooperation, maintaining dialogue even if there are no immediate results. The current events in Belarus remind us how rapidly migration routes and flows can shift.

### Don’t reinvent the wheel.

Re-imagined partnerships do not necessarily mean introducing new initiatives – quite the contrary. Implementing the commitments already taken and using existing migration dialogues is a useful way forward. What is needed now is less paper and more action.

Read more on the ICMPD website [here](#) and [here](#).

Watch the Conference recordings [online](#).



## The fourth International Border Management Conference took place in Kyiv

In November, ICMPD and the Ukrainian State Border Guard Service (SBGS) organised the International Border Management Conference to address key issues in the global border management sphere worldwide. This fourth edition took place in Kyiv, with 50 in-person attendees and over 300 online participants. The conference was financed

through several EU-funded projects implemented by ICMPD, including the Prague Process.

Two thematic roundtables allowed high-level representatives and experts to present their daily practices, experiences, achievements and recommendations concerning border management's

contribution to state development, as well as information exchange. The border domain is ever more complex but also full of opportunities and a strong driver for development. Speakers also underlined the essential role of efficient border management to cope with today's challenges and hybrid threats.

## Results of the 17th EU-Central Asia Ministerial Meeting



On 22 November, Dushanbe hosted the 17th EU-Central Asia Ministerial Meeting featuring the Foreign Ministers of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, as well as the European Union's (EU) High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and EU Commissioner for International Partnerships. The Parties met to discuss the state of cooperation between the EU and the countries of Central Asia and the prospects for expanding it in the areas of trade, investment and environment, as well as common security challenges. Participants also exchanged views on issues of mutual interest, such as the evolving situation in Afghanistan.

The EU presented its regional development cooperation priorities, in line with the 2019 [EU Strategy on Central Asia](#): promoting resilience, prosperity and regional cooperation. The current programming of development funds within the multiannual financial framework shall support their implementation.

Participants reaffirmed their joint com-

mitment to strengthen EU-Central Asia cooperation in a Joint Communiqué, stressing the need to make progress in areas such as the rule of law, democracy, governance, gender equality and universal human rights. As noted by High Representative Josep Borrell: *"The countries of Central Asia have made remarkable achievements since their independence 30 years ago. The EU and Central Asia share a strong commitment to intensify cooperation to build back better following COVID-19. The EU can make a strong contribution to the future of the region if Central Asian states show determination in their commitment to reform and democracy."*

The need to address labour rights and create opportunities for youth in the region, including better access to quality education and decent work, was equally emphasised. In this regard, the EU proposed to explore the possibility to set up a regional dialogue on the effective implementation of international labour standards. The Kyrgyz Republic suggested the establishment of a European University in Central Asia to support science, research and innovation.

Concerning the COVID-19 pandemic, particular emphasis was placed on the required vaccination support, along with a green and sustainable recovery of the region. The EU further encouraged continued progress in the implementation of the Paris climate commitments and the region's transition towards a green

economy. The latter should be based on increasing the share of renewable energies and the objective to reach climate neutrality. For Central Asia, cooperation on water and energy resources remains of particular importance. The development of regional cooperation in the areas of green economy, digitalization and an improved business environment was equally addressed during the EU-Central Asia Economic Forum held in Kyrgyzstan in early November. In this vein, the EU is beginning preparations for two regional Team Europe Initiatives, one of which will be devoted to Water, Energy and Climate.

Discussion about security challenges revolved around the regional repercussions of the situation in Afghanistan. While agreeing on the need to expand humanitarian assistance, participants stressed the need to prevent the country from turning into a regional terrorist hub again. They also acknowledged the necessity to strengthen cooperation for preventing unsafe and irregular migratory movements, as well as to counter migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings.

[Picture credit \(c\) The Asia Today](#)

[Read more about the Meeting:](#)

[Joint Communiqué: 17th EU-Central Asia Ministerial Meeting](#)

[Press release](#)

[The Asia Today: 17th European Union – Central Asia Ministerial Meeting](#)

## Migration addressed by the sixth Eastern Partnership Summit

The leaders of the EU, EU Member States and Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries (without Belarus) gathered for the sixth Eastern Partnership summit on 15 December 2021.

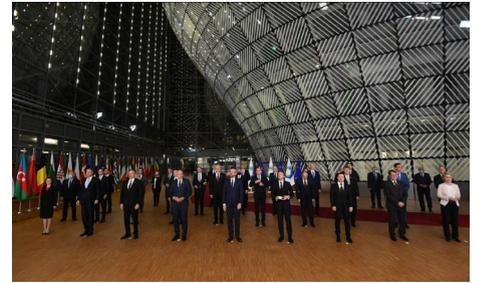
Concerning migration, they committed to improve legal and labour mobility in line with national competences while jointly tackling irregular migration. On mobility, they emphasized the importance to ensure the effective operation of visa free regimes and to consider new dialogues where conditions are met. Through migration and mobility

partnerships, the partners aim to fight irregular migration, address the issue of unfounded asylum applications, and enhance return and readmission. Therefore, capacity building shall be further strengthened, including through cooperation with EU agencies.

Furthermore, leaders committed to foster links between migration and development, advance capacities, ensure coordination among countries along migratory routes, ensure the protection of migrant workers and promote the effective integration of migrants.

Joint Declaration: [here](#)

Press release: [here](#)



## Celebrating International Migrants Day



For over 20 years, the international community celebrates International Migrants Day on 18 December. This date marks the anniversary of the *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families* adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1990. It is the day to praise the contributions made by migrants across the globe. Some of them fled conflicts, violence, war and environmental disasters. The majority, however, pursued economic goals given the lack of decent economic opportunities at home.

According to the latest UN estimates, there were around 281 million international migrants in the world in 2020, which equates to 3.6 per cent of the

global population. The great majority of people thus do not migrate across borders. After all, migration is an endeavour requiring financial means, connections, knowledge and considerable resilience to withstand arising challenges. Meanwhile, the migration discourse, often fuelled by misinformation and politicization, can overshadow the amount of 'good' that migrants bring and their important role as actors of change, socio-economic development and societal prosperity. Migrants provide a source of dynamism globally and are overrepresented in innovation and patents, arts and sciences awards, start-ups and successful companies.

Among various contributions, migrants and diasporas are increasingly seen as key to various peacebuilding efforts in conflict-affected countries. These efforts often include:

1. Activism and awareness-raising. There are sound examples when campaigning and lobbying for political involvement of countries of destination and residence helped to speed up peace processes in countries of origin or heritage.

2. Building bridges and fostering constructive dialogue. Migrants' contextual knowledge can support conflict resolu-

tion and peace building across borders.

3. Restoring and creating key institutions, such as diaspora agencies, which may otherwise not exist or may have been undermined during conflict.

4. Fostering policy development and negotiations to improve the political future of a country.

5. Returning home to run community and social cohesion programmes or take up key roles in government.

6. Financial contributions directed toward post-conflict reconstruction and development. International remittances have been widely shown as fundamental to supporting families and local communities, but also as important economic assets at macro level. Remittances can reduce the risk of conflict and diminish incentives for civil war in times of economic distress by helping to address the welfare needs of citizens.

7. "Social remittances" or the ideas, values and practices that migrants bring with them.

Read more about migrants and migration in the recent [World Migration Report 2022](#).

## When facts do not matter: How to bridge the gap between perception and reality about migration

Just in time for the International Migrants Day, the OSCE event **“Understanding Public Attitudes towards Migrants Beyond Polarization”** assessed the public discourse on migration. While migration has always been a sensitive and emotional topic, the recent years have seen an increasing polarisation of the topic, with the coronavirus further exacerbating the situation.

Migration can be a [driving force](#) for humanity helping to reduce inequalities and boost global development. Migrants often initiate businesses in host countries, thereby contributing to society. While such positive facts rarely capture the public attention, the more widely debated negative perceptions of migration often lead to discrimination, xenophobia, and the violation of human rights. For instance, many Europeans think that migrants constitute 25% of Europe’s population, while in reality this figure is only 10%. This view results in a [‘perceived threat’](#), which pushes the host community to choose between building walls (either literally or figuratively) or in-

tegrating the perceived ‘cause of threat’. This is why effective communication about migration and migrants should feature more prominently in state policies, including on integration.

The past few years have seen a large amount of new experimental evidence of various migration communication strategies. Among others, [these nine strategies](#) can be consistently effective:

1. Fact-checking, correcting misperceptions and “myth-busting” (most effective);
2. Eliciting emotions (as a mediating variable on the effect of providing the information);
3. Appealing to common interest rather than self-interest;
4. Appealing to conformity rather than diversity;
5. Focussing on types of migrants;
6. Emphasising common ground;
7. Eliciting empathy (individual stories

may be more powerful than statistical data);

8. Messenger effects (who is delivering the message);

9. Appealing to identity (less effective).

Overall, an effective and comprehensive migration policy shall be a viable mechanism, able to tackle ever more complex migration challenges in a timely manner. Bridging the gap between perception and reality is one such challenge, and it is of paramount importance to global security and development.

Learn more about the [E-mindful project](#) promoting balanced and effective communication about migration.



## Prague Process Migration Observatory: Newly released publications



### [Policy Brief ‘Impact of the Situation in Afghanistan on the Central Asian Countries: Implications for Migration’ by Ulan Nogoibaev](#)

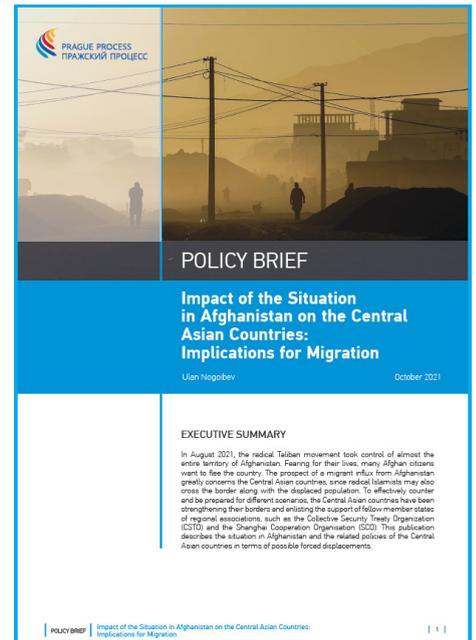
In August 2021, the radical Taliban movement took control of almost the entire territory of Afghanistan. Fearing for their lives, many Afghan citizens want to flee the country. The prospect of a migrant influx from Afghanistan greatly concerns the Central Asian countries, since radical Islamists may also cross the border along with the displaced population. To effectively counter and be prepared for different scenarios, the Central Asian countries have been strengthening their borders and enlisting the support of fellow member states of regional associations, such as the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). This publication describes the situation in Afghanistan and the related policies of the Central Asian countries in terms of possible forced displacements.

Read [here](#)

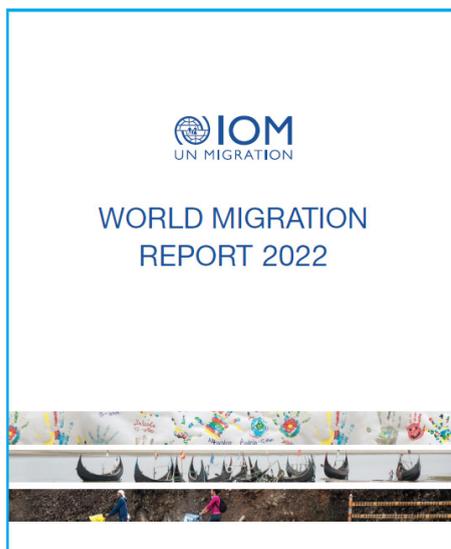
## Policy Brief 'The Role of Bias in the Identification of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings in the EU' By Ludmila Bogdan

Data show that trafficking in human beings (THB) for sexual exploitation continues to be the most prevalent form of trafficking. Moreover, women continue to constitute the great majority of victims identified in Europe. Much fewer trafficking victims are identified in agriculture, construction, hospitality, domestic work, or begging. This Policy Brief provides a statistical overview of the victims identified across the EU (2017-2018) and aims to assess why identification programmes struggle to identify and assist male victims and those facing exploitation outside the sex industry. The key question raised is whether identification efforts are biased towards trafficking for sexual exploitation and female victims.

Read [here](#)



## Reading recommendations



### World Migration Report 2022

Since 2000, IOM has been producing its flagship reports every two years. The World Migration Report 2022 is another extraordinary source for better understanding migration and mobility worldwide. It presents key data and information on migration as well as thematic chapters on highly topical migration issues. The Report is structured to focus on two key contributions:

- Part I: Key information on migration and migrants (including statistics); and
- Part II: Balanced, evidence-based analysis of complex and emerging migration issues.

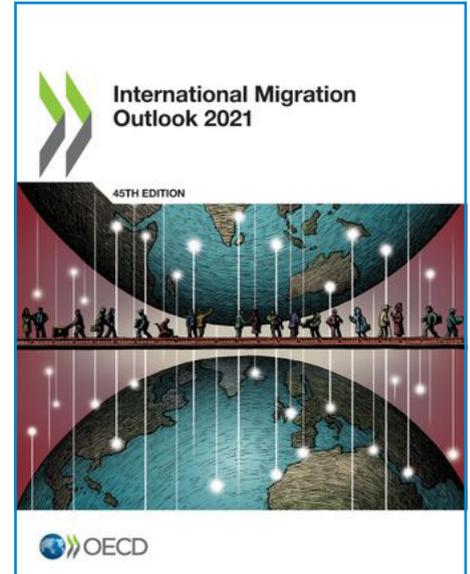
The World Migration Report 2022 interactive version is available [here](#).



### OECD International Migration Outlook 2021

The 2021 edition of International Migration Outlook analyses recent developments in migration movements and the labour market inclusion of immigrants in OECD countries. It also monitors recent policy changes in migration governance and integration in OECD countries. This edition includes two special chapters, one providing an in-depth analysis of the fiscal impact of migration in OECD countries since the mid-2000s and another on the causes and consequences of the residential segregation of immigrants. The Outlook also includes country notes and a detailed statistical annex.

The online accessible version is available [here](#)



### Blog 'Europe's sharper edges: EU migration policy after Lukashenko' by Hugo Brady

Geopolitics is accelerating reform of the EU's border and asylum regime. An external European frontier that once only existed on paper is taking shape. And Lukashenko's hybrid attack may have accidentally given birth to the Union's migration foreign policy.

Access [here](#)

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