



PRAGUE PROCESS QUARTERLY REVIEW

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EDITORIAL

Dear Reader,

We are delighted to share with you the January-March 2026 edition of the Quarterly Review, featuring the latest updates from the Prague Process.

In January, the traditional beginning-of-the-year Policy Talk assessed what migration policy developments to expect in 2026. Furthermore, ICMPD's [Regional Migration Outlook for Eastern Europe and Central Asia](#) pinpoints eight issues to look out for in 2026, helping to understand migration dynamics in this region. The Study Visit to Hungary in February provided practical insights into integrated border management through site visits to the Hungarian-Serbian border and Budapest Airport. Further in March, a workshop in Brussels addressed shared challenges and solutions in labour migration, highlighting the need for effective governance, skills matching and enhanced cooperation across the region.

Following the save-the-date letter issued by the Ministers of the Czech Republic and the Republic of Lithuania, the Prague Process has formally launched state consultations in preparation for the 5th Ministerial Conference, scheduled for January 2027 in Vilnius. These consultations aim to shape the mandate of the Prague Process for 2028-2032. The first intergovernmental consultation, held in March, focused on the Action Plan's provisions related to irregular migration and migrant smuggling, as well as readmission, return and reintegration.

Meanwhile, the Migration Observatory finalised updates of the country factsheets of numerous Prague Process states, providing concise snapshots of the migration situation and the latest policy developments. In addition, the Observatory released a new analytical report, exploring how migration could shape demographic and socio-economic future of the Western Balkans by 2035 under two scenarios: one driven by EU integration and circular mobility, and another marked by stagnation and continued outward migration. The Training Academy continued to provide learning opportunities through its available e-courses.

We trust you will find this edition enriching and informative.

With best regards,

Prague Process Secretariat

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LOOKING AHEAD: UPCOMING PRAGUE PROCESS ACTIVITIES

- 14-17 April | Vienna, Austria**
World Border and Security Congress and Workshop 'Lessons Learnt from Border Management Initiatives in the Prague Process Region'
- 22 April | Online**
Towards the 5th Prague Process Ministerial Conference: Thematic Consultation on Labour/Legal Migration; Integration
- 20 May | Online**
Towards the 5th Prague Process Ministerial Conference: Thematic Consultation on Asylum/International Protection; Migration and Development
- 23-24 June | Skopje, North Macedonia**
Towards the 5th Prague Process Ministerial Conference: 1st Preparatory Senior Officials' Meeting

POLICY TALK 'LOOKING INTO 2026: WHAT MIGRATION-RELATED DEVELOPMENTS TO EXPECT'

Jean-Louis De Brouwer, Director of the European Affairs Program at the Egmont Institute, and Malin Frankenhaeuser, ICMPD Director Policy, Research and Strategy, reflected on key migration policy developments of 2025 and outlined expectations for the year ahead, as the EU prepares for the implementation of the Pact on Migration and Asylum in June 2026. Their discussion highlighted a pivotal moment for EU Member States, who must navigate a complex mix of operational, legal and political challenges against a backdrop of ongoing geopolitical instability and continued displacement from Ukraine. The exchange emphasised core priorities such as strengthening migration management and border control, addressing irregular migration, enhancing talent attraction and return policies, and deepening external partnerships, while also identifying remaining gaps and areas requiring further coordination.

Watch the recording [here](#).



PRAGUE PROCESS STATES EXPLORE HUNGARY'S INTEGRATED BORDER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM DURING STUDY VISIT

In February, Hungary hosted a Prague Process study visit on border management, gathering 38 experts from 15 countries to exchange practices on addressing irregular migration and migrant smuggling. The visit highlighted the growing need for integrated, adaptive border governance systems that combine prevention, risk analysis, inter-agency coordination and technological innovation in response to evolving migration dynamics. Participants explored Hungary's comprehensive four-tier integrated border management model, as well as practical operations at land and air borders, including the use of advanced surveillance technologies, digitalisation tools and risk-based approaches. The exchanges underscored the importance of cooperation, evidence-based decision-making and operational readiness in tackling increasingly complex migration challenges across the region.

Read more [here](#).



LABOUR MIGRATION IN FOCUS: PRAGUE PROCESS WORKSHOP IN BRUSSELS

The workshop brought together migration experts, policymakers and practitioners to explore labour migration as a central element of economic and migration governance amid labour shortages and demographic change. Discussions highlighted the need for well-managed systems that balance attracting foreign workers with ensuring fair conditions, strong governance and effective integration. Participants examined diverse national approaches alongside shared challenges such as skills mismatches, lengthy procedures and risks of exploitation, while also reflecting on recent EU initiatives like the Talent Pool and Legal Gateway aimed at simplifying recruitment and enhancing Europe's attractiveness. The exchange further underscored the growing role of digitalisation,

international cooperation and innovative mobility schemes, as well as the continued value of peer learning within the Prague Process.

Read more [here](#).



THEMATIC CONSULTATIONS: INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW OF THE PRAGUE PROCESS ACTION PLAN IN PREPARATION OF THE 5TH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE



The first round of intergovernmental consultations dedicated to the thematic areas on preventing irregular migration and migrant smuggling, as well as on promoting return and reintegration, brought together participating states and partner organisation to review and update priorities under the Action Plan 2023–2027 in preparation for the 2027 Ministerial Conference. Discussions focused on strengthening cooperation along migration routes, enhancing operational and analytical capacities, and improving responses to migrant smuggling, while ensuring respect for fundamental rights. The consultations also addressed the need to reinforce readmission systems, expand voluntary return programmes and support sustainable reintegration through better coordination, digitalisation and links with related policies. The exchange highlighted the importance of adaptable, forward-looking frameworks that reflect emerging migration dynamics and shared challenges across the region.

The results of the consultations will be presented to Senior Officials in June 2026 and further reflected in the update of the Action Plan for the next phase of Prague Process cooperation.

MIGRATION OBSERVATORY: NEW PUBLICATION

The Prague Process Migration Observatory continues to support informed policy-making by providing impartial, evidence-based analysis across the region and in line with the six thematic areas of the Prague Process Action Plan. All publications are stored in the repository.

Analytical Report 'Western Balkans 2035: Demographic Resilience and Strategic Migration Planning under EU Integration and Isolation Scenarios'

Read in [English](#) or [Russian](#)



Every two to three years, 47 country factsheets are updated to include the overview of the most recent developments in terms of migration policy and legislation in each Prague Process state as well as migration data from both national and international sources. The factsheets thus constitute a concise and useful source of information on the migration situation throughout the region.

In 2025, we updated the following 37 factsheets: *Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Kosovo*, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, North Macedonia, Malta, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye.*

TRAINING ACADEMY: AVAILABLE E-COURSES

The Training Academy provides tailor-made trainings addressing the priorities set out by the Action Plan 2023–2027. Since 2021, the e-Learning Platform has served the participating states and partners with educational material for self-paced independent remote learning.

The platform offers the following courses: *Introduction to Migration Studies, Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Integrated Border Management, Labour Migration, Identification and Profiling at the Border.* It also provides access to the course *Holistic Approach to the Integration of Migrants and Refugees* (available in English).

We invite representatives of the Prague Process states and partner institutions to take advantage of this remote learning opportunity. Access to all courses is granted to eligible representatives upon registration on the platform.

READING RECOMMENDATIONS

- European Commission: Updated Ukraine Recovery and Reconstruction Needs Assessment
- European Commission: Progress report on the Union of Skills
- European Commission: EU Visa Strategy and Recommendation on attracting talent for innovation
- European Commission: Communication on the EU's eastern border regions
- Council of the European Union: Adoption of the EU-wide list of safe countries of origin and safe third country concept
- European Parliament: Adopted regulation on EU Talent Pool
- European Parliament: Resolution on EU enlargement strategy
- EUAA: Report on overview of national implementations plans and national strategies
- EUAA: Guide on the Asylum Border Procedure
- FRA: FRA survey on women fleeing the war in Ukraine
- FRONTEX: Irregular border crossings by February 2026
- Eurostat: Temporary protection by January 2026
- ICMPD: Migration Outlook 2026
- ICMPD: Migration Outlook 2026 Eastern Europe and Central Asia
- ICMPD: Resources for Journalists: Key Findings on Irregular Migration
- Handbook: Global Concerns of Migration, Displacement, and Geopolitical Challenges in Central Asia
- ESCAP: Policy Brief 'New Migration Trends in Central Asia and the Russian Federation'
- World Bank: The Journey Ahead 'Supporting Successful Migration in Europe and Central Asia

