

Key-Note speech Martijn Pluim, Director Eastern Dimension, ICMPD

Irregular Migration: Enforcement and International Cooperation

International Conference “Combating illegal migration: Actual calls, operational experience and interaction in modern conditions”

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In my presentation I would like to briefly touch upon the forces driving irregular migration and its transnational nature and to elaborate shortly on the securitisation of the migration area and enforcement of migration policies. Moving to international cooperation, I will touch upon the role of regional dialogues on tackling irregular migration. Finally, I will give a few examples of what seems to work and what not based on the experience we have gained.

First, just a few words on ICMPD. The International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) was established in 1993, upon the initiative of Austria and Switzerland as a support mechanism for informal consultations, to provide expertise on migration and asylum issues and do comparative policy research.

Today, ICMPD is an international organisation with 15 Member States, about 150 staff members, a mission in Brussels and regional offices and representatives throughout Europe, Northern Africa, the Middle East and South America. ICMPD holds UN observer status.

Forces behind Irregular Migration

(As mentioned by previous speakers,) irregular migration poses real challenges for states, and exposes migrants themselves to insecurity and vulnerability. The forces driving irregular migration are very complex, powerful and difficult to modify such as the disparities in the level of prosperity, human rights and security in different parts of the world. At the same time, perceived lack of perspectives in the home country or of opportunities in host countries may be more important than the factual situation. It is undeniable that from an economic perspective irregular migration is actually quite functional for some economic sectors in destination countries. Therefore, efforts to govern irregular migration are not likely to succeed if its economic rationale is not properly understood. Very often economies need unskilled workers while the general

public would not accept a proactive labour recruitment policy, resulting in conflicts of interest and paving the way to backdoors or conflicting practices at best.

Therefore, despite tighter immigration systems in the destination countries and increased enforcement of the last decades, it must be acknowledged that it has been difficult to cease, deter or control irregular migration effectively.

Why should irregular migration be addressed

Both regular migrants as well as irregular migrants may contribute to the development of the destination countries and the country of origin. However, the irregular status of the latter severely limits these contributions.

- Irregular status reduces potential income (limiting material remittances)
- Irregular status increases material and immaterial costs of movement and residence, and makes the migrants vulnerable for exploitation and abuse
- Irregular migration contributes to social hardship for children and family left behind, as obviously formal family reunification is no option
- Irregular migration contributes to distorted perception of migration among the host society
- It undermines security due to links with organised crime, violence, and corruption
- AND – last but not least – irregular migration by mis-using legal means of entry harms the interest of bonafide travelers, as controls and procedures are made increasingly strict by host countries

Thus, irregular status is detrimental to all concerned, the sending and the receiving countries as well as the individual migrant concerned and the family. **And increasingly, countries of origin therefore cooperate actively in the fight against illegal migration, especially when combined with actions to facilitate legal migration!**

However, the reality is that transnational criminal networks in all their disguises will be able to undermine migration control, as long as this control is based on a national logic and separated from mainstream policies on aid, trade, development, governance and international cooperation.

We need smart and effective enforcement of laws while streamlining and **facilitating the legal immigration process**. We need to **prioritise the identification and removal of criminal foreigners** who pose a threat to public safety. We need to **target employers** who knowingly and repeatedly break the law. Thus, we need to strengthen **labour inspections** and ensure the consequent enforcement of the sanctions. Finally, we need to **combat human smuggling and trafficking** through enhanced public outreach, victim assistance, and law enforcement training and initiatives. And we need to **cooperate internationally**, regionally and bilaterally.

This concrete international cooperation could include:

- **Sharing real-time information** and conducting regular meetings and maintaining regular contacts between countries of origin, transit and destination
- Conducting joint training on issues of common interest, such as document forgery, and data analysis
- Establishing common contact centres/offices between two or more countries – bilateral, trilateral or quadrilateral – at strategically relevant border crossing points
- Deploying immigration liaison officers and/or sharing liaison officers with countries who have deployed them...

Multilateral or bilateral partnerships and dialogues can play an important role in preparing the ground for this concrete cooperation by creating a common understanding on how to address illegal migration.

The role of regional dialogues on migration

Dialogues are the drivers to exchange information, identify shared interests and build trust and commitment as a basis for operational cooperation among parties. Dialogues are to be pursued both by regional processes and at bilateral/national level with key partner countries. I would like to use the example of the Budapest Process and the Prague Process as the key migration dialogues covering also the CIS area.

The Budapest Process

ICMPD is serving as the BP Secretariat since almost 20 years of operation. The Budapest Process has developed to a far reaching forum on migration management, engaging an ever increasing number of states in Europe and Asia in intergovernmental dialogue. Currently 54

States and more than 10 international organisations are participating in this regional process, including IOM, UNHCR and ILO.

Acknowledging the international debate and changing policies on migration, the **Budapest Process** has moved away from a regional dialogue focusing specifically on irregular migration to one incorporating all policy areas of migration.

However, to stay close to our topic, I will focus on the measures just agreed in Istanbul last week. Among others, the Budapest Process states agreed to initiate measures to

- a) Furthering the exchange of information and experience between states and relevant stakeholders on irregular migration and related crime;
- b) Improving coordination between all agencies involved in preventing and combating irregular migration and migrant smuggling
- c) Stepping up cooperation in the area of integrated border management, and the exchange of information, with due respect to applicable rules on data protection,
- d) Consider establishing contact points, including through immigration liaison officers,
- e) Taking measures to prevent the misuse of legal migration channels while exchanging information, experience and good practices in order to prevent the abuse of asylum systems,
- f) Raising awareness of, and providing clear information to, potential migrants, on the risks and dangers associated with irregular migration,
- g) Exchanging information, experience and know-how on document security, including travel-, identity, and breeder or source documents,

Now is the time to breath life into these statements and indeed implement these measures.

ICMPD also functions as the Secretariat of the **Prague Process**. The Prague Process is a targeted migration dialogue policy process promoting migration partnerships among the countries of the European Union, Schengen Area, Eastern Partnership, Western Balkans, Central Asia, Russia and Turkey, which altogether is 50 participating states including all those present around this table today).

In the area of combating illegal migration, the Prague Process Action Plan 2012-2016 adopted in 2011 in Poznan among others lists the following agreed priorities:

- 1) To promote cooperation between migration-related agencies and state authorities, including by signing working arrangements, with a particular focus on:
 - a) the exchange of relevant analytical methods focused on illegal migration channels, and of best practices on combating organised crime networks involved in the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings,
 - b) the promotion and development of Integrated Border Management through the development of a comprehensive training strategy on border management, including on mechanisms to ensure access to international protection for those in need, the setting up of an inventory of existing border security technologies and the identification of technological needs,
 - c) the exchange of best practices on establishing the identity and/or nationality of irregular migrants,
 - d) the exchange of best practices on implementation of international standards regarding security of travel documents, visas and other relevant documents including on the use of biometrics.

On 2 August 2012 the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Poland and the European Commission signed a contract for implementation of the Prague Process Targeted Initiative and the project “Support for the Implementation of the Prague Process and Its Action Plan”. The project will last three years. This project will among others focus on implementing a Pilot Project on Illegal Migration, which is dealing with the areas mentioned as well as with readmission agreements.

Dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen.

Your meeting here today, gathered in the framework of the CIS, is another example how international dialogue between likeminded states can help in addressing illegal migration. And by combining the proposed actions adopted by your ministers (or their representatives) with your specific needs and priorities you can be even more successful, even in a rapidly developing global geopolitical framework.

Thank you