ROSA
LUXEMBURG
STIFTUNG
NORTH AFRICA OFFICE

Expanding the European Border Regime

The Early History of the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), 1993-2004

Fabian GEORGI

With an Epilogue by Sofian Philip NACEUR

Fabian Georgi
is a political scientist working at the University of Kassel. He has researched and published on the dynamics of migration and border regimes, critical political economy and political theory for more than two decades. He is a co-editor of *movements. Journal of Critical Migration and Border Regime Studies.*
For more information: https://fabiangeorgi.de/

Sofian Philip Naceur
is a Tunis-based freelance journalist, working with the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation's North Africa office, and various media outlets and NGOs. After reporting from Cairo as a correspondent from 2012 to 2019, he mostly works today on Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia and border regimes across northern Africa.

Translation to English: Carla Welch

Graphic and Design: Roots Prod

ROSA LUXEMBURG STIFTUNG
NORTH AFRICA OFFICE

This publication is the sole responsibility of the publisher. The positions expressed herein do not reflect the views of the funding agency. The publication is distributed free of charge and may not be used for electoral compaigning purposes.

Table of Content

Preface

In May 2023, the *ZDF Magazin Royale* – a German political satire show popular among liberal and left-wing intellectuals – aired an episode entitled 'Efficient and Discreet', spotlighting a little-known player in the European border regime: a Vienna-based intergovernmental organisation known as the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD). According to the programme's producers, the ICMPD's unofficial motto is 'Let the good foreigners in, keep the bad ones out' (ZDF Magazin Royal 2023: 1:48 min; see ICMPD 2023). As a result of the broadcast, longstanding criticism of the ICMPD from anti-racism and human rights groups finally gained wider public attention. The broadcast was the result of a growing number of critical analysis on the ICMPD that build on an investigation by a Tunisian human rights organisation into the ICMPD's activities in North Africa (Naceur 2021). This brochure seeks to contribute to this renewed wave of critical research. It reconstructs and interprets the context in which the organisation was established in the early 1990s and traces its development over the first decade. In this way, it makes key empirical findings from studies on the ICMPD published in the 2000s accessible to an English-speaking readership for the first time.

The ICMPD is by no means a minor or insignificant actor. As of 2024, it had 21 member states and employed over 500 staff. Over the last ten years, its annual budget has increased dramatically. Composed to a smaller part of regular contributions by member states, and to a larger extent of project grants, it rose from 17 million euros in 2015 to over 100 million euros in 2024. The value of all projects currently under contract, i.e. funds that will be partly spent in future years, stood at over 700 million euros in 2024. By its own account, it is active in 90 countries throughout Europe, Africa, and Asia (ICMPD 2024a: 1, 4; ICMPD 2025d: 92). The main appeal of the organisation to participating governments, according to the *ZDF Magazin Royale*, lies in its discreet and informal mode of operation. 'What is needed', the programme's host Jan Böhmermann remarks sarcastically, is 'an organisation that inconspicuously keeps the foreigners off our backs, without burdening us ordinary EU citizens with too much of that human rights nonsense. And indeed, we already have the solution: it's the ICMPD' (ZDF Magazin Royale 2023: 2:27 min.). The ICMPD's inconspicuousness, Böhmermann goes on, also lies in its technocratic language. This, the programme claims, helps disguise a repressive or closed-border policy as simple 'migration management'. This rhetoric allows the organisation to support and expand deeply problematic forms of

migration control, while also deflecting the public's attention away from these practices. In a similar vein, Böhmermann mocked the ICMPD's 'Mission Statement', calling it a masterclass in pretentiously garbled policy jargon: 'We build evidence-driven migration policy options and governance systems that engage and equip our partners with effective, forward-leaning responses to opportunities and pragmatic solutions to complex, regional migration and mobility challenges' (ICMPD 2024a: 1).

ZDF Magazin Royale's satirical criticism of the ICMPD emerged from a joint investigation with other media outlets, most notably the German investigative platform *fragdenstaat* and the Austrian daily newspaper *Der Standard* (Deleja-Hotko 2023; Schmid/-Deleja-Hotko 2023). The investigation addressed several key issues. Among them were the ICMPD's opaque influence on the development of restrictive European migration policies, the training and border fortification projects it coordinates for police units in North Africa, as well as its involvement in a Bavarian pilot project for a payment card for asylum-seekers, which was promoted in close cooperation with the Wirecard Group and its chief operating officer Jan Marsalek[1].

The growing criticism directed against the ICMPD is also linked to its substantial growth over the past decade. Since 2016, the organisation has been headed by former Austrian Vice-Chancellor Michael Spindelegger (Austrian People's Party, ÖVP). This has contributed to a massive expansion of its budget and a shift in its focus towards activities outside Europe (Deleja-Hotko 2023; ICMPD 2024b: 0:55 min.). As journalist Sofian Philip Naceur wrote in an article for the German daily *taz* in 2020, the ICMPD is not just a 'civilian think tank', but rather

'one of the key implementing agencies for EU border control projects in Libya, Tunisia and Morocco. […] Today, the ICMPD carries out such projects directly, organises the procurement of equipment for border reinforcement, and is involved in designing curricula for training programmes and developing surveillance technology'

(Naceur 2020)

However, the critical studies published on the ICMPD over the last five years are not the first time the organisation has faced criticism from human rights and anti-racism groups.

[1] The partnership with Wirecard and Jan Marsalek around 2019 appears even more problematic in retrospect. Marsalek has been in hiding since the summer of 2020 and is wanted for fraud, embezzlement and other white-collar crimes. Reports published in December 2023 also alleged that he was an agent of the Russian intelligence service (Deleja-Hotko 2023; Pancevski/Colchester 2023).

Early Research and Criticism

The ICMPD was established in spring 1993 by the Austrian and Swiss governments as a small pilot project, initially limited to a period of three years, based in Vienna. Its main mandate was to continue, on a new institutional footing, the informal discussions that had been ongoing since the mid-1980s between Western UNHCR member states who were unhappy about what they perceived as a too liberal, pro-refugee policy of the UNHCR leadership. These debates focused on the development of a migration and asylum policy that was both more restrictive and more 'rational' from an economic perspective. In response to the end of the Cold War and the subsequent fall of the Iron Curtain, the ICMPD was set up to expand and consolidate this debate and give it more of a European focus (ILO/OSCE 2009: 90: 91f.; see IGC 2018). Just how committed the ICMPD was to a state-driven approach to migration control and management from the very outset is illustrated by the following statement in its founding agreement: 'Measures taken at the national level to control immigration, while crucial, are insufficient to keep the scale and composition of immigration flows within the bounds wished for by the parties' (Agreement on the Establishment of the ICMPD 1993, trans. F.G.). Or, in the words of Jan Böhmermann and the *ZDF Magazin Royale*: 'Let the good foreigners in, keep the bad ones out' (ZDF Magazin Royale 2023: 1:48 min.).

Statements like this, along with a praxis that, even in the years immediately after it was established, was highly problematic from a human rights perspective, led to the first wave of anti-racist and human rights-based criticism directed at the organisation in the late 1990s and early 2000s. According to the Forschungsgesellschaft Flucht und Migration (Research Association on Flight and Migration, FFM), the ICMPD was a 'multifunctional think tank of the kind more commonly seen in US politics' (Dietrich/Glöde 1999: 20) and a 'coordination unit for strengthening border posts in Central, Eastern and Southeast Europe' (ibid.: 22). Migration and border regime expert Frank Düvell placed the organisation alongside other 'migration control "think tanks"' (Düvell 2002: 100). The anti-racism initiative *Plattform für eine Welt ohne Rassismus* (2001) even argued that the ICMPD was rooted in the tradition of the racial and folkish (völkisch) movement, with its principles of 'soil' and 'homeland', ascribing it a 'key role in monitoring, evaluating and dismantling international refugee flows and routes'.

The extent to which these characterisation correctly described the ICMPD during its first decade and whether they still hold true today is the focus of the current publication. It examines the specific context in which the ICMPD was established and its development from 1993 to 2004. At the core of the publication is the question of what shaped the ICMPD's practices and policies during this period, and how its political significance at the time can be evaluated. The publication also reflects on the political rationality underpinning the ICMPD's approach, in other words the motives and maxims for action that formed the basis of the organisation's migration policy strategies, based on its goals and assessment of the situation.

The Brochure: Translated, Revised, Extended

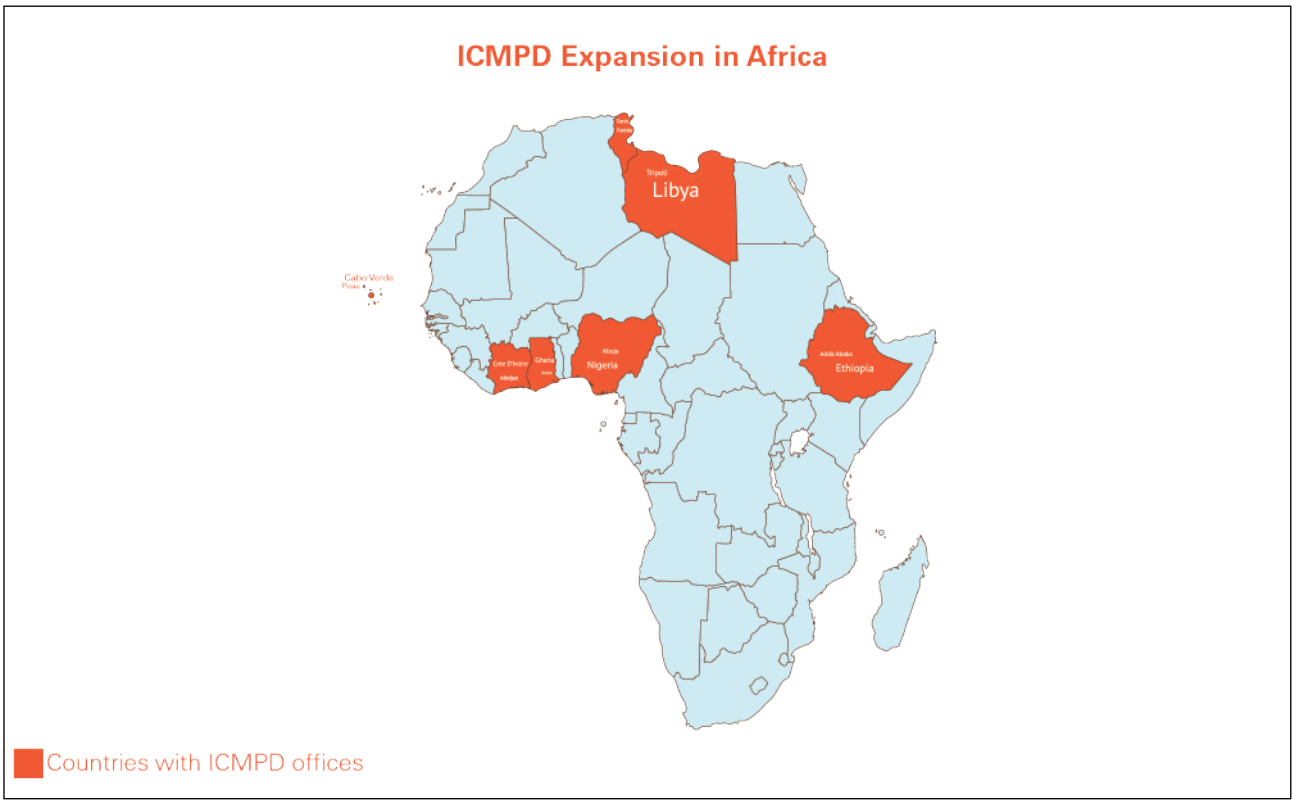
This publication is based on translated, revised and in some cases extended excerpts from the degree dissertation I submitted to the *Freie Universität Berlin* in 2004, which was later published as a book (Georgi 2007). Since then, the publication has frequently been referenced in studies on the ICMPD. However, up until now, its has only been available in German, while communication within the networks conducting critical research on the ICMPD and the European border regime is, for the most part, in English, French and Italian. The decision to translate and revise this now more 20-year-old text is primarily due to the relevance of its subject matter.

Over the last decade, the ICMPD has seen rapid expansion. In the 1990s, its work was still concentrated on Central and Eastern Europe. Since the early 2000s, however, it has also been involved in efforts to establish and develop Euro-Asian border regimes, largely through the gradual expansion of the Budapest Process – an informal, intergovernmental 'regional consultation process' (RCP; see Thouez/Channac 2006) on migration policy. In this context, the ICMPD has been active in Central Asia since 2003 and in Western and Southeast Asia since 2010. Since 2013, the organisation has been implementing migration control projects along the region's Silk Road (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) (Budapest Process Secretariat/ICMPD 2023: 58, 89ff.; ICMPD 2025a).

As early as 2002, the ICMPD began supporting the externalisation of European migration control to North Africa, initially under the auspices of another intergovernmental RCP – the now largely inactive Mediterranean Transit Migration Dialogue (MTM). Today, the ICMPD also plays a leading role in other RCPs focused on Africa, most

notably as the secretariat for the Rabat Process launched in 2006 and by providing technical and logistical support for the Khartoum Process, established in 2014. Under the umbrella of these initiatives, European governments have been working to facilitate and expand a largely restrictive Euro-African migration regime (see ICMPD 2025b).

Despite these earlier developments, the expansion of the ICMPD's activities to Africa did not gain real momentum until 2016. At that time the organisation significantly increased its activities on the African continent, demonstrated by the opening of offices in Tunis (Tunisia), Tripoli (Libya), Abidjan (Ivory Coast), Accra (Ghana), Abuja (Nigeria), Praia (Cabo Verde) and Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) (ICMPD 2024a: 1).



Even more significant, however, was the shift in the organisation's migration policy strategy – both in scope and in nature. Previously, the organisation's activities had been largely shaped by a 'soft power approach', which included research, policy consultancy, training and publications. From the mid-2010s onward, however, the ICMPD increasingly supplemented this approach with various elements of operational 'hard power'. This encompassed not weapons and ammunitions but all other kinds of security equipment and supplies, as well as training for customs, border guard and

police authorities, in several authoritarian states, including Tunisia, Morocco, Jordan, and Lebanon (Naceur 2021: 31ff.). The governments of these countries have repeatedly faced accusations of severe human rights' violations against both their own citizens and people on the move from NGOs such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International as well as from UN bodies (Amnesty International 2023; Human Rights Watch 2023; OHCHR 2024). Even the construction of training centres and police academies has now become part of the ICMPD's remit (ICMPD 2025c). The ICMPD justifies and 'rationalises' its role in expanding the Euro-African border regime using a rhetoric of 'migration management', a framework it first developed in the 1990s. According to this logic, a relentless fight against 'irregular migration' is needed to make a European migration policy that aims to filter and select migrant workers based on their economic value politically viable.

Given that the ICMPD was set up 32 years ago and, over the last ten years, has expanded significantly – both in regard to its contracted project value and its grographical outreach –, there is still surprisingly little literature on the organisation. This is all the more surprising given that not only the ICMPD, but also the field of migration and border studies has grown exponentially in the last decade. With the exception of my study, presented here in English (Georgi 2007), the ethnographic research conducted by Sabine Hess (2011), which is based on participatory observation within the ICMPD office itself, as well as studies conducted since 2020 primarily by Sofian Philip Naceur (2020, 2021) and Vera Deleja-Hotko et al. (2023), there seems to be a notable lack of analysis focused explicitly on the ICMPD as an actor in European and international migration and border regimes. The criticism levelled at the ICMPD in recent years has made it clear that the organisation 'warrants' more attention in the form of investigative research and scientific analysis, particularly studies focused on human rights violations and a critical examination of the border regime. Against this backdrop, the current publication seeks to contribute to a critical debate on the ICMPD at the international level as well as to offer empirical findings and insights for future studies and research.

Deepening Critical Analysis

To gain a deeper understanding of the activities, role and importance of the ICMPD, it is crucial to look at how the organisation emerged and developed in its early years. The political and institutional decisions and developments during this formative phase

[2] That said, over 1,000 versions of the ICMPD website (beginning in 1998) have been archived in the Internet Archive Wayback Machine. See https://web.archive.org/web/20100101000000*/icmpd.org.

continue to shape the ICMPD's work and relevance today. One of the distinguishing features of this study is that it draws on written sources that are no longer publicly accessible, including annual and financial reports as well as project descriptions and official self-representations published by the ICMPD on its website at the time[2]. It was also based on seven semi-structured interviews with ICMPD employees, including the organisation's founding director, Swedish-born Jonas Widgren, and his then deputy and successor at the ICMPD's helm, Gottfried Zürcher. These interviews offer rare insight into the ICMPD's institutional context as well as its self-perception in its early years – something that would be very difficult to reconstruct today[3].

The study shows that the ICMPD was established in response to new patterns of migration that emerged following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Initially conceived as a temporary pilot project, it was intended to provide policy coordination and consultancy. The expansion of the European migration regime into Central, Eastern and Southeast Europe, provided the organisation with a broad field of possible activities. It soon became a key implementing agency for the EU and its member states – as well as for various UN bodies – in the areas of border fortification, 'return and repatriation policy' and the 'fight against irregular migration'. Informally, even then, it supported the expansion of the European migration regime beyond Central, Eastern and Southeast Europe. Overall, during this early phase, it played an important but not central role in the development and externalisation of the European border regime.

In its work, the organisation has conducted a wide array of activities that can be understood as governance techniques designed to influence, steer and control the composition of populations and their movements. The different practices employed by the organisation, both past and present, have included the following elements: coordinating informal intergovernmental dialogue, developing intergovernmental networks at civil servant level, providing direct services for member states, engaging in policy development and practice-oriented migration research, compiling statistics, providing secretariat services, analysing migration routes and, lastly, operational deployments, especially within the context of European efforts to extend forced deportations to a growing number of third countries. Since its establishment in the early 1990s, the informal nature of many of the organisation's activities and its use of technical and apolitical management jargon have been its distinguishing features. It thereby contributed to the broader informalisation and depoliticisation of migration policy. One of the organisation's guiding principles has always been a 'European phi-

[3] The original version of my dissertation, which can be found in the archives of the Department of Political and Social Science, contains full transcripts of all seven interviews.

losophy' that advocates for the communitarisation of migration policy within the EU and supported the establishment of a global migration regime aligned with the logic of neoliberal global governance. In terms of its policies and overall strategy, it saw tackling 'irregular' migration as a basic condition for achieving its goal of increasing immigration filtered along economic rationales.

The following analysis of the ICMPD's development, activities and policies begins with the context in which it was established in the 1980s and early 1990s. The subsequent sections deal with the organisation's trajectory from 1993 to 2004, which I have divided into three distinct phases. The final chapter offers an analysis of the organisation's political rationality and significance. In a concluding epilogue, Sofian Philip Naceur reflects on the ICMPD's evolution over the past decade and offers his assessment of its current role and importance.

1. The Origins of the ICMPD: Migration Policy in Crisis

> *"Western Europe was at that time in the midst of an asylum crisis, requiring innovative collective measures to reform asylum and refugee reception systems. Migration from and through the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe was on the rise and the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina had led to mass displacement, requiring international burden-sharing. At the global level, it was recognized that growing north-south migration pressure will be a major issue on the political agenda for the next millennium."*
>
> *The history of the creation of ICMPD*[4]

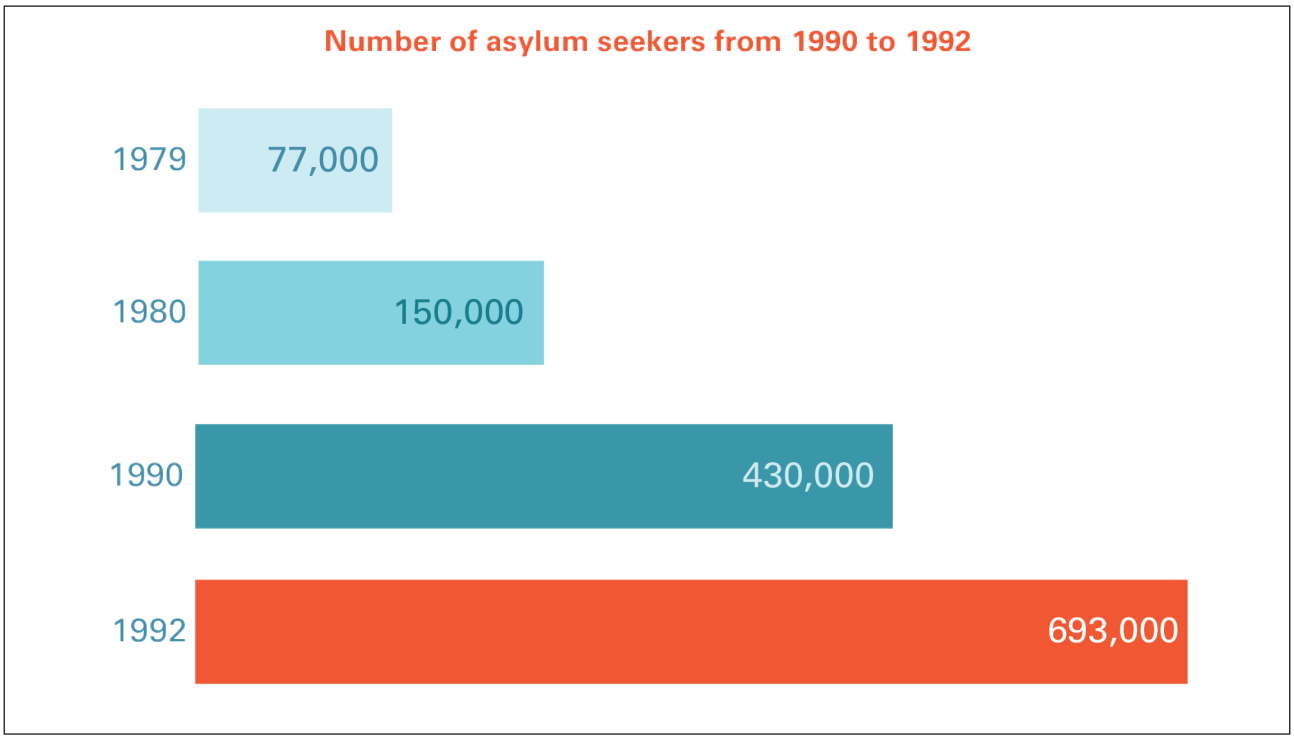
New Patterns of Migration in Europe

In the run-up to the establishment of the ICMPD in late 1992, clear references were made to the different migration movements at that time. The 'asylum crisis' (then an overused term in German-speaking countries, referring to the increasing numbers of asylum applications), East–West migration, the Bosnian War and the growing South–North migration were the most important political factors. To convey the context in which the ICMPD came about, I will first outline the changes in European migration policy from the early 1970s to the early 1990s.

The early 1980s saw an increase in asylum migration to Western Europe as other legal access routes were blocked. In 1973/1974, Western European reception countries, including West Germany, France and Sweden, which had previously actively recruited 'guest workers' or labour migrants, imposed a freeze on immigration. The main reasons for this were the onset of recession and the oil crisis in the early 1970s (Herbert 2001: 217). The period of labour migration was followed by a phase of family reunification, which lasted until the early 1980s, with many migrants settling permanently in Western Europe and bringing their families to join them. As governments increasingly restricted family reunification, seeking asylum effeectively became the only legal means of emigrating, apart from elite and educational migration channels, who were too small in size to be of relevance. Consequently, the number of people seeking asylum in Western Europe sharply increased from the end of the 1970s (see Bade 2000: 363; Marrus 1999: 416–421). In 1979, for instance, there were around 77,000 asylum seekers in Western Europe. In 1980, the military coup in Turkey and the repression of the Solidarność movement in Poland resulted in approximately 150,000

[4] ICMPD 2004b. The quote was taken from the ICMPD's website. The obvious error (growing north-south migration) was also in the original quote.

asylum seekers, around 100,000 of whom came to Germany. After a significant decline from 1982 to 1984, the number of asylum seekers rose again, reaching around 430,000 by 1990 and 693,000 by 1992 (Bade 2000: 363f.; Münz 1997: 42).



During the early 1990s, debates on the issue focussed on three groups of refugees and migrant workers: migrants moving from the East – especially the former Soviet Union – to the West; refugees from Yugoslavia; and migrants from the Global South. Estimates on immigration from the former Soviet Union at the time proved to be vastly exaggerated. Russian scholars cited figures of 40 or even 48 million immigrants expected to end up in Western Europe by 1995 – forecasts which in some cases were used as implicit threats during talks on economic aid (Bade 2000: 386–387). Terms such as 'new waves of migration', 'migration flood' or 'tide of refugees' conjured up images of natural disasters. In reality, migration from the East turned out to be much less dramatic. Between 1989 and 1992, an estimated four million people left the territories of the former Soviet Union and other Eastern Bloc countries. Given the fact that the Iron Curtain had served as a barrier to migration for decades, this figure was surprisingly low. Before the October Revolution and even during the inter-war period, East–West migration had been a fundamental phenomenon in European history, albeit one that was, even then, often fraught with conflict. In this respect, the opening

of borders and the increasing East–West migration after 1989 can be seen as a return to old migration patterns (Bade 2000: 36; Saasen 1996: 126–129).

In his book *The Unwanted: European Refugees in the Twentieth Century*, published in the mid-1980s, Michael Marrus appeared somewhat surprised upon identifying 'the apparent end of the European refugee problem which has bedeviled political leaders since the First World War' (Marrus 1999: 371). It was not until the civil and proxy wars in the former Yugoslavia between 1991 and 1995 that forced displacement and mass flight reemerged within Europe. The majority of refugees in the former Yugoslavia remained internally displaced – around 3.5 million people. However, the approximately 80,000 Croats and 700,000 Bosnians who fled to Western Europe marked what was then the largest refugee movement in Europe since the Second World War (Bade 2000: 430–432).

A third element of the debates on immigration was the South–North migration. This was often the focus of racist moral panics, although in reality, South–North migration only saw a slight increase in the 1990s (see Bade 2000: 439–452; Widgren 2000: 142; Körner 1997).

Start of International Cooperation

In the early to mid-1990s, all European states affected by new migration movements adopted laws designed to restrict the right to asylum and combat 'irregular' migration. Although these laws were adopted at national level, they were, even then, coordinated and prepared within supranational European bodies.

Until the Maastricht Treaty was signed in 1991, most of these forums were part of a network of intergovernmental cooperation that organised policy outside the structures of the EC. Governments worked together to prevent unwanted immigration. In 1989, the Ad Hoc Group on Immigration, comprising the interior ministers of the EC, presented a report outlining principles that would continue to shape European migration policy throughout the 1990s: free movement of people within the EU; the gradual alignment of and cooperation on asylum policy and border control; and, lastly, the tightening of visa, border and immigration regulations (Düvell 2002: 76–80).

The result of this cooperation and other informal forums were the Dublin and Schengen Conventions. A key element of the Dublin Convention, which did not enter into force until 1997, was the provision that asylum seekers whose applications had been rejected in one member state were to be considered rejected for the whole of the EC/EU (Bade 2000: 394–395). The Schengen Regime, established with the signing of the Schengen Agreement in 1985 by Germany, France, Belgium, Luxemburg and the Netherlands, aimed to abolish internal border controls. As compensatory measures, controls at external Schengen borders were to be strengthened, uniform regulations for issuing visas adopted and the Schengen Visa Information System created. The various treaties and agreements within the Schengen regime formed what became known as the Schengen acquis[5] that had to be fulfilled by all new EU member states, with the ICMPD already playing an instrumental role in its implementation (Hofmann et al. 2004: 103).

The 1991 Maastricht Treaty was pivotal for migration policy, as it marked the shift from centralised coordination between national governments to debate and decision-making within the bodies and procedures of the European Union. As a result, while issues related to border controls, asylum and immigration policy still had to be decided intergovernmentally and by consensus within the Council of Ministers for Justice and Home Affairs, they were now prepared and discussed within EU structures and in accordance with the EU Commission's right of initiative. Moreover, with the Maastricht Treaty, different formerly intergovernmental bodies were incorporated into EU structures, strengthening the EU's role as a key, though not the only, entity for European cooperation on migration issues. The Maastricht Treaty was important because the integration of certain policy areas and previously independent bodies into the EU's competence, bureaucracy and initiative triggered a dynamic which advanced the establishment of a unified migration policy, particularly in the area of asylum (Düvell 2002: 76–77; Hrebek 2000: 94–96; Hofmann et al. 2004: 105–107).

Informal Consultations and the Berlin Process

Outside the structures of the EC/EU, there were also the Intergovernmental Consultations on Asylum, Refugee and Migration Policies in Europe, North America and Australia (IGC). Established in 1985 by UN High Commissioner for Refugees Poul Hartling, the IGC functioned as a forum facilitating cooperation on migration issues among specific countries of origin and destination. Between 1987 and 1991, these 'Informal

[5] Acquis literally means 'that which has been acquired' and refers to the accumulated body of laws, regulations and policies that the EU candidate countries were required to implement or meet in the course of the accession process. The Schengen acquis was part of the overall EU acquis, often referred to as the acquis communautaire. It dealt with issues of border security and migration policy.

[6] The 16 IGC member states were Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK and the US.

[7] For more information on the IGC, see Düvell 2002: 106–107; Widgren 1990: 763; Widgren 1993a: 16–17; Widgren 1993b: 285–286; Interview Widgren 2004; Interview Zürcher 2004: Interview Gehrke/Pluim 2004; ILO/OSCE 2009: 91f.; IGC 2018.

Consultations' were formally conducted under the auspices of the UNHCR, gradually becoming an increasingly important coordination body for the main UNHCR donor countries, allowing them to discuss their fundamental goals. The IGC brought 13 Western European countries together, along with the participation of Australia, Canada and the US, as well as the UNHCR and the IOM[6]. The IGC played a crucial role by offering Western governments a platform to discuss the overarching direction of their asylum and migration policies. Key questions raised by participants included: 'We bear the entire financial burden, so what exactly are our expectations? What are our perceptions of the changes to migration?' (Interview Zürcher 2004) By early 1992, the IGC had become the primary forum for long-term, fundamental debate on asylum and migration policy among Western industrial nations. Its importance should certainly not be underestimated. Indeed, it was here that key concepts such as 'safe third countries', 'safe countries of origin', 'accelerated asylum procedures' and sanctions for transport companies were first developed (Hofmann et al. 2004: 93; ILO/OSCE 2009: 92; IGC 2018: 41, 44)[7]. These concepts were enshrined in national laws and in the Schengen and Dublin Treaties during the first half of the 1990s, contributing to a sharp decline in asylum applications. The number of applications for asylum in Western Europe fell from almost 700,000 in 1992 to 287,000 just four years later (Münz 1997: 42).

In October 1991, on the initiative of then German Minister of the Interior Wolfgang Schäuble (Christian Democratic Union, CDU), the Conference on Combatting Illegal Migration from Central and Eastern Europe was held in Berlin. The border control and visa policy recommendations adopted at the conference marked the kick-off of the coordinated and Europe-wide political effort to reduce 'irregular' East–West migration (Ministerial Conference 1991). Following the Berlin Conference and subsequent minis-

terial and civil servant meetings that became known as the Berlin Process, the Hungarian government took the lead in February 1993, organising a second ministerial conference in Budapest. The Budapest Process was born. The Budapest Process, which is still in existence today, is a conference and workshop format aimed at developing and presenting recommendations for individual member countries and assisting them in implementing these recommendations. In 1994, the ICMPD was appointed the secretariat of the Budapest Process (Hofmann et al. 2004: 96), a role it continues to fulfil to this day.

In summary, three key aspects of European migration policy can be identified that played a particularly important role in the creation of the ICMPD up to 1993. First, both the objectives of European migration policy and the public debate surrounding immigration in the early 1990s were marked by a defensive approach to immigration. The primary focus was on limiting migration rather than 'managing' it. Second, between 1990 and 1993, the rise of right-wing extremist and populist parties and movements posed a threat to political stability, endangering the interests of Europe's political elites. The emergence of Jörg Haider's Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (FPÖ) in Austria, Jean Marie Le Pen's Front National in France, Christoph Blocher's Schweizerische Volkspartei (SVP) in Switzerland and Franz Schönhuber's Republikaner alongside an alarming increase in racist violence in Germany, marked a crisis of political (neo)liberalism. The efforts undertaken by European states to bring migration under control, including creating an institution such as the ICMPD to achieve this, can also be seen as a response to the potential of migration to provoke social conflict (see Widgren 2001b: 2). Third, despite the the predominantly restrictive tendencies of migration policy at the time, the years leading up to 1993 saw the establishment of the key institutional frameworks that facilitated more intensive international cooperation aimed at controlling and 'managing' migration. The institutions that emerged during this period formed a regime that developed its own momentum, fostering greater cooperation among European states on migration issues.

The following sections demonstrate how this momentum led to the establishment of the ICMPD, how the organisation shaped the ensuing dynamics and how, at the same time, the ICMPD consistently sought to exert its influence, proving its value and relevance for the development of the European border regime.

2. The International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)

> *"Europe has one intergovernmental organisation that exclusively deals with migration, specifically illegal immigration, return and repatriation, visa policy and border protection. Just one."*
>
> *Jonas Widgren, former Director General of the ICMPD*[8]

History of the Organisation

The ICMPD was officially established in spring 1993 and began its work in November of the same year. A number of factors were instrumental in the establishment of the organisation, one being the 'Informal Consultations' (Intergovernmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees – IGC), the role of which changed sometime around 1992.

Figure 1: ICMPD logo

Source: www.icmpd.org

Having previously taken the form of a committee serving as a platform for debate on fundamental strategic aspects of migration policy, from 1992, the consultations evolved into more of a technical organisation, an internet-based network that coordinated the work of experts and working groups around the world[9]. However, not all of the participating states were in agreement with this change. Gottfried Zürcher, then Switzerland's representative on the IGC who took over as ICMPD's Director General in January 2005, explained in an interview that in 1992/1993, Austria and Switzerland had taken the initiative to establish the ICMPD in order to ensure the continuation of the fundamental debate on coordinated European migration policy, a debate that had started within the IGC and that had been intended to have a long-term perspective. The communication between Western and Eastern Europe when it came to migration policy was still lacking and the Austrian and Swiss governments felt that closer cooperation was imperative. Both the various experts interviewed for this study and the ICMPD's early descriptions of its role have repeatedly emphasised how important it was to develop a migration policy that was 'long term' and 'more principled' (Interview Zür-

[8] Interview Widgren 2004

[9] The information on the IGC's limited access homepage (www.igc.ch) is still being updated to this day. The part of the website which was previously publicly accessible was deactivated in late 2000/early 2001 (see IGC 2000; IGC 2001). Because of this lack of transparency and the fact that its membership remained unchanged, the IGC was referred to as a 'a closed club' (Interview Gehrke/Pluim 2004) or a 'closed secret club' (Interview Zürcher 2004).

cher 2004; Interview Gehrke/Pluim 2004; ICMPD 2004a, 2004b). The Swiss government had another reason for spearheading the establishment of the organisation. Following a referendum in 1992 that saw a majority vote against joining the European Economic Area (EEA), the Swiss government hoped to use the ICMPD initiative to counter its increasing isolation in Europe, including when it came to migration policy (Interview Zürcher 2004). Jonas Widgren, who was Coordinator of the IGC from 1987 to 1992 and the Director General of the ICMPD from its foundation in 1993 until his death in August 2004, ensured strong personal and thus strategic continuity between the IGC and the ICMPD. The ICMPD, which was born of the IGC and was sometimes even referred to as the 'Eastern IGC' (Interview Gehrke/Pluim 2004), was charged with developing a long-term policy regarding migration movements from Eastern Europe, a task the IGC could no longer be expected to carry out.

'And Switzerland and Austria then said: 'We just can't continue like this; we can't work in this forum anymore. Let's start again, and this time with no links to the UNHCR. Let's start afresh in Vienna. Especially because this time entirely new dimensions are coming into play – the Bosnian War and the opening-up of Eastern Europe.' And this institution should then address the East-West dimension and can serve as the secretariat for the processes that Germany and Austria both started in 1991. And I was then approached by Austria and Switzerland, in consultation with Sweden because I was a Swedish civil servant. And that's how I became the Director of the ICMPD'

(Interview Widgren 2004)

Here, Widgren is referring to the Berlin Conference organised by the German government in October 1991, which culminated in the Berlin Process and later the Budapest Process (Ministerial Conference 1991). As early as January 1991, the Austrian government held its own conference in Vienna, likewise on the topic of East–West migration but with a longer-term perspective. This gave birth to the Vienna Process, which went on to be incorporated into the Council of Europe in 1994 (see Ministerial Conference 1991: 5–6). The founding of the ICMPD was thus closely linked to the Berlin and Budapest Processes. From the government's standpoint, it was clear that the Budapest Process would need a secretariat to provide technical and operational support, as well as research and policy advice centred on Central and Eastern Europe (ICMPD 2004b; Widgren 1993a: 17). Accordingly, the Agreement on the Establishment of the ICMPD explicitly stipulated that new members had to support 'the principles expressed in the Vienna, Berlin and Budapest Ministerial Conferences' (Agreement on the Establishment of the ICMPD 1993: 5). This provision attests to the close links, both institutional and thematic, between the establishment of the ICMPD and the migration policy initia-

tives launched by Western European states in the early 1990s. It follows that, in 1994, the ICMPD was officially made the secretariat of the Budapest Process.

Institutional Development

Four key agreements between the member states provide us with an understanding of the ICMPD's institutional development. The 'Agreement on the Establishment and Functioning of the "International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)"', signed by Switzerland and Austria in Vienna on 1 June 1993, established the ICMPD with the following goals:

'In addition to the illegal South–North movement of primarily asylum-seeking migrants, which has seen a marked increase over the last few years, migration from East to West has recently been on the rise. Measures taken at the national level to control immigration, while crucial, are insufficient to keep the scale and composition of immigration flows within the bounds wished for by the parties. The establishment and implementation of long-term strategies for tackling the issue of migration is therefore a matter of some urgency. Such long-term strategies are aimed at facilitating early recognition and combating the causes of migration, harmonising migrant reception practices and coordinating policy on aliens, asylum and refugees. The goal of the Agreement is to enhance international cooperation and promote research on migration policy'

(Agreement on the Establishment of the ICMPD 1993)

The Agreement on the Establishment of the ICMPD had the status of an administrative agreement and primarily governed the organisation's functions and financing. At the time, the ICMPD did not yet have legal personality but was a three-year fixed-term research and advisory institution subject to Austrian law. After this period, two amending agreements, signed in March and April 1996, secured the organisation's continued existence. The first of these two agreements was concluded on 27 March 1996 and extended the term of the original contract by eight years, until 30 April 2004 (Vertrag über die Erste Änderung des ICMPD-Vertrags 1996). The preamble to the agreement on the first amendment expressed the satisfaction of the member states Switzerland and Austria, as well as Hungary, a third member state, with the work of the ICMPD. In line with this recognition and, 'in order to clarify the legal context of the ICMPD and its staff as well as to improve the Centre's effectiveness' (ibid.), a month later, a second amending agreement was signed, giving the ICMPD the status of an international organisation with its own legal personality (Agreement on the Second

Amendment to the ICMPD Agreement 1996). The specifics concerning the organisation, its staff and its headquarters were negotiated with Austria and in 1997, the organisation was granted partial diplomatic status. Slovenia and the Czech Republic, which joined in 1998 and 2001, respectively, increased the number of members of the ICMPD to five. In 2002, in recognition of its growing importance, the organisation was granted observer status by the United Nations (ICMPD 2004p: 3–5).

The third change to the ICMPD's legal basis was in June 2003 when another amending agreement was concluded. The existing administrative agreement was converted to a state treaty, which had to be ratified by the parliaments of the member states (Agreement on the Third Amendment to the ICMPD Agreement 2003a; Dobnigg 2003). This agreement removed the fixed term of the ICMPD for good and, recognising that a number of states wanted to join the treaty, made it easier for new members to be accepted. Between 2002 and 2004, six new members joined: Sweden (November 2002), Bulgaria (April 2003), Portugal (early summer 2003), Poland (December 2003) and Croatia (January 2004). In February 2006, following lengthy negotiations, Slovakia became the 11th member of the organisation[10].

Documentation produced by the ICMPD has repeatedly emphasised that the organisation not only enjoys the support of its member states, but that it has also concluded cooperation agreements with numerous states and international organisations and receives funding from others. In fact, in 2004, over 30 states were reported to be backing the ICMPD[11].

Organisational Structure

The ICMPD's organisational structure incorporated a range of different components. In its key features, it remains unchanged. The Steering Committee (today 'Steering Group'), comprising an appointed representative for each member state, was at the helm of the organisation. The committee's remit was to take or approve the key deci-

[10] Currently (as of June 2025), the ICMPD has 21 member states. In the order in which they joined, these are: Austria (1993), Switzerland (1993), Hungary (1995), Slovenia (1998), Czech Republic (2001), Sweden (2002), Poland (2003), Croatia (2004), Bulgaria (2003), Portugal (2004), Slovakia (2006), Romania (2011), Bosnia-Herzegovina (2012), Serbia (2014), North Macedonia (2015), Malta (2018), Germany (2020), Greece (2021), Netherlands (2023), and Ireland (2024) (ICMPD 2024a: 1).

[11] In 2004, the organisation signed cooperation agreements with Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cyprus, Estonia, Georgia, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Macedonia, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine. There have been negotiations regarding cooperation agreements with Malta, Sri Lanka, Egypt and the League of Arab States. Australia and the USA were observers, and a memorandum of understanding was signed with Canada. Moreover, Australia, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway and Great Britain provided regular support. France, Germany, Liechtenstein and the USA provided occasional financial assistance. There were also cooperation agreements with the IOM, UNHCR, Interpol, IMP, OSCE, WCO and SECI (ICMPD 2004p: 4–5; Hofmann et al. 2004: 94, fn. 35; as of May 2004). One of the reasons why no major Western European countries (Germany, France, Great Britain, Italy, Spain) had become a member of the ICMPD or signed a cooperation agreement with the organisation until the mid-2000s was the fact that the ICMPD primarily offered services that the larger states were less reliant on.

sions relating to the work of the ICMPD. For example, the Steering Committee approved the annual report, the budget, the work programme, the conference programme, contracts, agreements, and projects, appointed the director and decided on the admission of new member states (Agreement on the Establishment of the ICMPD 1993: 3; see ICMPD 2025e).

Thanks to the provisions set down in the Agreement on the Establishment of the ICMPD and, in the early phases that are the focus of this study, Jonas Widgren, the Director General of the ICMPD had an extraordinarily important role. He was directly responsible for the Steering Committee but also had a lot of leeway regarding how the day-to-day operations of the organisation were conducted, for instance when it came to staff recruitment and organisational management. Even more important than this, however, was his role with respect to the organisation's policy orientation. Although the ICMPD did not have an independent political mandate, the Director General had the freedom to publicly represent political positions in fulfilling the goals of the founding agreement (Interview Widgren 2004). Assisting the Director in carrying out his responsibilities were the Director General's Office and an Advisory Body. This latter committee which comprised 'key political actors as well as figures from academia and the scientific community from various interested states and international organisations' (Agreement on the Establishment of the ICMPD 1993: 5) had no authority to issue instructions, but was tasked with proposing new projects and supporting the organisation in the acquisition of funding.

In the mid-2000s, the ICMPD was divided into three departments (ICMPD 2007e): Consultancy Services comprised policy advice and policy evaluation as well as training programmes for civil servants or border guards, for instance. Consultancy Services also included Information Systems, a previously independent department that was responsible for the different projects and activities of the Source Country Information System (SCIS). The pillars of the Policy Development Department included the different intergovernmental consultation forums, in particular the Budapest Process and the Mediterranean Transit Migration Dialogue (MTM), the Research and Documentation Department and a Policy Development Working Group. Lastly, there was the administrative Human and Financial Resources Department.

This division should not belie the fact that in practice, the organisation's work was often more flexible, and the structures tended to be horizontal. Another component of the ICMPD were its 12 representatives or contact offices outside Vienna (as of 2007).

Some of these representatives worked on project coordination, as was the case in Kosovo, Albania and Bosnia. Others maintained relations with partners such as the European Commission in Brussels, the UNHCR and IOM in Geneva, or with the Hungarian government as the chair of the Budapest Process (ICMPD 2007a)[12].

Financing and Staff

In 2004, the ICMPD published its first Activity Report, which provided more detailed insight into the organisation's financing (ICMPD 2004p). In 2003, the organisation's regular budget amounted to 1.025 million euros, with the overall funding for that year totalling 3.5 million euros. This overall budget came from several sources, some of the most important being member contributions and project funding from different donors. The financing of the organisation also comprised other elements, however. The main headquarters in Vienna, for instance, was provided by the Austrian government free of charge. As the secretariat of the Budapest Process, the ICMPD also received core funding which was notoriously difficult to collect. In addition to this, member states 'seconded' representatives for a given period, which meant that in these cases the ICMPD did not incur any additional staff costs. In 2003, the ICMPD employed 13 core staff members alongside around 30 staff in temporary project-financed posts. There were also other posts in the contact offices in different European capitals and areas of operation.

In the early phase of the ICMPD, the number of employees and the size of the budget increased slowly but steadily. In around 2002, the growth rate levelled out, at least temporarily (ICMPD 2004p: 20ff.).

Something that made a particularly important contribution to this increase was the fact that from 1997, the EU made it easier for international organisations to apply for project funding in the areas of justice and home affairs (Interview Gehrke/Pluim 2004). During this phase, the organisation's regular budget included the costs of core staff, travel, the running of the main headquarters, etc. Given that the members' contributions only amounted to around 560,000 euros in 2003, covering 57 percent of the regular budget (ICMPD 2004p: 22). The 2003 'core budget' comprised about 3.5 million euros and resulted from different project grants. By far the largest donor was the European Commission, which provided funding in the amount of almost one million euros, followed by Switzerland and Austria with 500,000 euros each. As non-members,

[12] The ICMPD has had local representatives or offices since 2007 in Albania, Belgium, Bosnia- Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Egypt, Macedonia, Finland, France, Lebanon, Serbia and Montenegro, and Switzerland (ICMPD 2007a).

Sweden (150,000 euros) and the UK (180,000 euros) each contributed considerably more than the Eastern European member states, whose contributions to project funding were negligible. In general, however, strong dependence on project funding is not unusual for international organisations (see Georgi 2019: 264ff.).

Jonas Widgren

The establishment and initial phase of the ICMPD up until 2004 and thus the organisation's specific approach to migration management, which is the subject of this study, are inextricably linked to the person Jonas Widgren. From the foundation of the organisation in 1993 until his death in August 2004, Widgren was the Director General of ICMPD. Born in Stockholm in 1944, he began studying philosophy and religion in 1964. As a student, he campaigned against the Vietnam War and for the rights of refugees and migrants (Gradin 2004: 7). After completing his studies, he took up various positions in the Swedish Ministry of Home Affairs and Labour and, from the late 1960s, dealt with issues related to the immigration and integration of migrant workers. From 1982 to 1987, Widgren, who was a member of the Swedish Social Democratic Party, served as State Secretary in Olof Palme's cabinet, where he was responsible for migration policy and gender equality. It was after this that he began his international career.

In April 1987, Widgren became Coordinator of the IGC, based at the UNHCR in Geneva. Formally, he was still a Swedish civil servant; informally, as a representative of the governments participating in the IGC, his role was to bring influence to bear within the UNHCR (Interview Widgren 2004; on the huge dissatisfaction of Western donor states with the UNHCR in the 1980s and early 1990s, see Georgi 2019 157ff., 191ff.). During his time in this post, Widgren was instrumental in advancing the concepts of 'safe country of origin', 'safe third-country rule', 'accelerated asylum procedures' and sanctions against transport companies. If we consider the impact of these measures and the vital role Widgren played in developing them, this gives us a good idea of both his position on specific issues and his importance for the changes to the European migration regime (ICMPD 2004d: 190; ICMPD 2002a; Gradin 2004: 9). In 1992, Widgren was replaced as IGC Coordinator[13]. From 1993 onwards, he headed the ICMPD as Director General, at the same time publishing numerous articles and serving as an adviser for the European Commission (ICMPD 2002a, 2004j). Widgren passed away on 25 August 2004 in Rijeka, Croatia. He was succeeded at the helm of the ICMPD by his former

[13] There is evidence, albeit ultimately unverified, that the reason for Widgren's replacement was, on the one hand, a change in the IGC's priorities, but also the conflict between Widgren and the UNHCR over the specifics of deportations and return policy (Interview Gehrke/Pluim 2004).

deputy Gottfried Zürcher, a former civil servant with the Swiss State Secretariat for Migration.

In the words of ICMPD employees, whose assessment is unlikely to be objective but is probably well founded, Widgren was one of the 'most influential' actors and 'a very, very important figure' in European migration policy (Interview Gehrke/Pluim 2004). Thanks to many years of experience working in this policy area, Widgren had extensive knowledge and a broad network of contacts. These qualities appeared to place Widgren in a dominant position within the ICMPD, both from a policy and an administrative perspective. This position was something that the ICMPD clearly benefited from, as evidenced by its growth in the early stages; at the same time, however, it was also something that constrained and jeopardised the organisation. 'If the Director General of one of these pioneer organisations is knocked down by a car, then the organisation itself is quite clearly at risk, too. This is what makes these types of organisation different' (Interview Zürcher 2004). In this respect, efforts made to distribute and secure the organisation's 'institutional knowledge' in 2003 under the banner of 'sustainability' were seen by ICMPD's staff as a consolidation of the organisation (Interview Zürcher 2004).

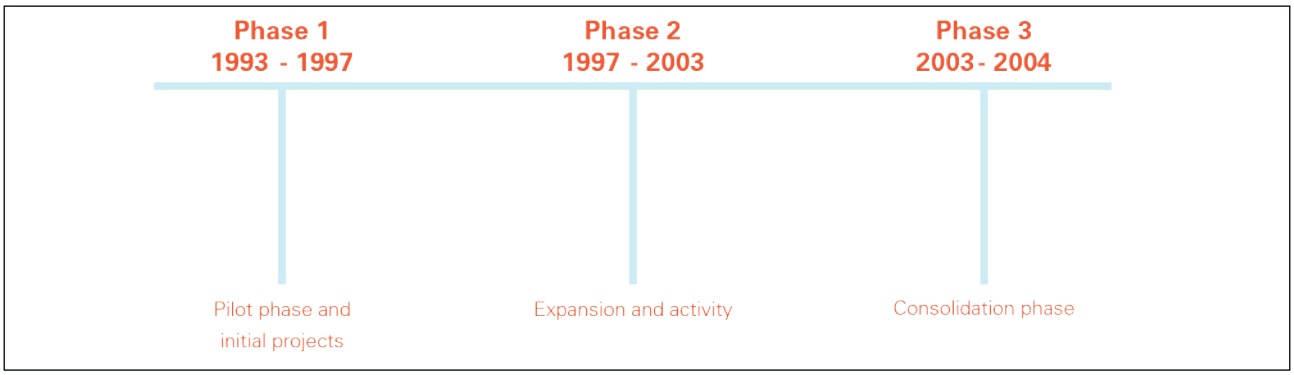
Because they are fundamental to understand the ICMPD's programme, Widgren's political goals are described in detail below. By way of introduction, four key aspects are outlined here. First, when it came to combatting illegal migration, Widgren supported a restrictive policy at all stages and using various means. Especially noteworthy here is his commitment to a strict return or deportation policy. Second, for demographic and economic reasons, he sought to increase immigration to Europe to around five million a year in the medium term. Third, Widgren advocated a comparatively progressive integration concept which sought to overcome ethnic and culturalist resentment. Lastly, he also wished to see the creation of a comprehensive multilateral migration regime, which, beginning in Europe and then expanding globally, would bring every facet of migration policy – refugee protection, labour migration, combatting illegal migration – into one single regime or one intergovernmental organisation (see Widgren 2000; ibid. 2001b).

The Development of the ICMPD until 2004

The development of the ICMPD from its establishment in 1993 until 2004 can be divided into three phases, which will be presented in the following sections. The first (pilot phase and initial projects) begins with the organisation's official founding in November 1993 and continues to the third Ministerial Conference of the Budapest Process in Prague in October 1997. Alongside the continuous provision of services as a migration policy think tank, the notable success of this conference and thus the entire Budapest Process as well as its secretariat was the formative development of those initial years.

The second phase (expansion and activity) begins with the Prague conference and can essentially be described as a six-year period of expansion, during which the organisation increased its array of projects, its financing and its political importance. The key elements of this phase involved preparing for the EU's eastward enlargement, 'combatting irregular migration' in Southeast Europe and developing the Source Country Information System (SCIS).

In June 2003, in recognition of the organisation's successes, there was a change in status of the ICMPD agreement from an administrative agreement to a permanent state treaty. The conclusion of this treaty marked the beginning of the third phase, which was described by staff members as a period of consolidation and reorientation. An underlying trend during this period was the geographical expansion of the ICMPD's migration management to include the Mediterranean region and the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). This phase of consolidation ended just over a year after it had started following the death of Jonas Widgren in August 2004, which triggered both personnel and strategic changes. The period beginning in 2004 is not the subject of the current study. Overall, however, the ICMPD has continued its organisational expansion (for an account of ICMPD's development since 2004 see the epilogie to this brochure, as well as Hess 2010; Naceur 2021).



3. Pilot Phase and First Projects (1993–1997)

> *"We said we wanted a pilot and for that we needed a pilot phase. So, has the model proved itself? Do the member states benefit from the organisation's services? Is it something useful or is it completely superfluous? This is something we had to prove. And indeed still have to prove. [...] [W]e have to keep asking ourselves this question. Why do we exist? What are we doing? And I think this rubs off on the staff and the organisation. This knowledge that we don't just ... exist, come what may."*
>
> *Gottfried Zürcher in 2004, then Deputy Director of the ICMPD*[14]

European Migration Policy in the 1990s

The 1990s were a transitional phase for European migration policy. This period is roughly framed by the collapse of the Soviet Union (December 1991), the Maastricht Treaty (signed in February 1992) and the Bosnian War (from April 1992) at its start and the Amsterdam Treaty (which came into force in May 1999) and the Kosovo War (February to June 1999) at its end. In between was the steady, and, in retrospect, surprisingly rapid expansion of a pan-European migration and border regime. The European Commission made extensive use of its right of initiative in the field of migration and asylum granted under the Maastricht Treaty and submitted numerous proposals. These initiatives and the work of the various committees both within and outside the EU paved the way for the Amsterdam Treaty, which represented another milestone for the regime: the communitisation of EU asylum policy (see Kasparek 2017: 30ff.).

Despite the progress made in the development of the regime, Western European governments viewed the migration policy of the 1990s with ambivalence. With the right to asylum as an access route largely closed and a lack of any real channels for legal labour migration, people who were hoping for protection and/or the prospect of a better life in Western Europe turned to illegalised channels, bypassing both the old and the new regulations. Moreover, these governments saw the arrival of hundreds of thousands of refugees from Croatia and Bosnia in Western Europe as a sign that the border regime had failed, and this meant it needed to be expanded further and made more restrictive (cf. European Council 1998; Widgren 1998a: 6). Thus the ICMPD was in its pilot phase when, in the view of Western European governments, some ground-

[14] Interview Zürcher 2004

work on a new European migration regime had been carried out, more had to be done if the movement of people to and within Europe was to be brought under control.

Main Areas of Activity During the Pilot Phase

During the pilot phase, the ICMPD was not yet in a position to present itself as the confident international organisation it would become in later years. Instead, the organisation was a small policy consultancy institute with a modest team of staff. Its activities during this period can be divided into four different types: direct services to the member states, commissioned research, operational projects and secretariat services.

The direct services to the member states were instrumental for the ICMPD's understanding of its own role as a service organisation (Interview Zürcher 2004). The member states had the option, at no additional cost, to commission the ICMPD to carry out assignments, which it then duly fulfilled. This service was part of the informal and flexible approach that the ICMPD presented as one of its strengths (ICMPD 2004p: 3). These commissions generally comprised very specific, clearly defined questions:

'[A] country asks: "Why do we have a group of asylum seekers from these countries, while this other country does not?". "We want to develop an integration concept. How do other countries go about this?" [...] Or: "What are the effects of measures such as anti-terrorism laws? What are the effects on migration flows?" [...] One specific incident that served as a catalyst for questions was the situation in Madrid [i.e. the terrorist train bombings in Madrid on 11 March 2004, F.G.]. "What happens now? Will tougher steps be taken? How does this impact migration flows and migration policy?"'

(Interview Gehrke/Pluim 2004)

Especially during the early phase of the ICMPD, these services to the member states made up a large part of its work. The service function also helps explain why, to begin with, it was the smaller European countries in particular that joined the ICMPD. The fact 'that some smaller EU member states had access to a special secretariat, and this is of course important for projects and consultation' is also something Widgren refers to as a key function of the ICMPD (Interview Widgren 2004).

The second area of activity was commissioned research. The main customers were the ICMPD's member states and, from 1997, increasingly the European Commission. Apart from the emphasis on a practice-oriented approach and the relevance of the

research for political decision-making, which gave the ICMPD its reputation as 'a think tank for migration control' (Düvell 2002: 100), it was also a 'regular' research institute which competed with other institutions for project funding. This competition points to a dual feature of the ICMPD's early phase. On the one hand, it was an intergovernmental organisation that was on a par with institutions such as the WTO, the UNHCR or the IOM. On the other hand, in its practical work, the ICMPD resembled many public and private research institutes that deal with migration processes. The focus of the organisation's research work was interdisciplinary and comparative analyses of various aspects of migration and migration policy (Interview Jandl 2004). An important project at the time was The Key to Europe, one of the first comparative analyses of the entry and asylum policies of selected Western counties (ICMPD 1994). The types of activity that were part of the operational projects and secretariat services will be addressed in the following sections on the repatriation of Bosnian refugees and the Budapest Process.

Repatriation of Bosnian Refugees

In the mid-1990s, the Bosnian War was at the centre of European migration policy and thus also a focus for the ICMPD. Drawing on the entire scope of its remit, the organisation participated in the repatriation of around 700,000 Bosnian refugees living in Western Europe. As early as 1993/1994, the ICMPD was already assisting with the preparation for and negotiations on the return of the refugees after the end of the war:

'How can we prepare for the return [of the refugees] to Bosnia-Herzegovina? [...] A country that is missing a third of its population has little future. How can the country be rebuilt? What conditions have to be created? We have already played an instrumental role, especially in the Property Claims Commission. Housing had to be rebuilt'

(Interview Gehrke/Pluim 2004)

Various projects were conducted during this time. In June 1994, almost a year and a half before the end of the war, the Austrian government organised a conference in Vienna on the voluntary return of Bosnian refugees. After the conference, the ICMPD compiled a report comprising approximately 100 pages of conference documents (ICMPD 2004r). The organisation also produced a similar report on an informal working meeting of government representatives of seven European host countries held in Vienna in December 1995. The subject of the meeting was the possibilities for the repa-

triation of Bosnian refugees resulting from the Dayton Agreement concluded just a month earlier (ICMPD 2004s). When it comes to research in this area, the 1995 study Refugees from Mostar in European Countries and their Willingness to Return Home is worth highlighting. This study involved research conducted in the city itself as well as interviews with refugees from Mostar in seven Western European countries, examining their willingness to return home (ICMPD 1995).

At the same time, the ICMPD organised operational projects in Bosnia itself. First, it supported what was known as the Commission for Real Property Claims in Bosnia, which dealt with the return of refugees' homes, where necessary also facilitating relevant property loss or damage compensation, in order to enable them to return home (Interview Gehrke/Pluim 2004). Second, in 1997, supported by the UNHCR, KFOR (Kosovo Force, the NATO-led international peacekeeping and military force for Kosovo) and later the European Commission, the ICMPD established the Repatriation Information Centre (RIC). The RIC gathered information about the situation in Bosnia to make it possible for those refugees to return home who did not want to do so voluntarily. This was the successful predecessor project of the Source Country Information System (SCIS) (see below; see ICMPD 2004o).

The Budapest Process and its Secretariat

The Budapest Process, which was set up in 1991 and still exists today, is an informal conference structure, a forum for governments and international organisations, in which politicians, senior officials and 'practitioners' discuss and plan the further development of migration policy in Europe and beyond. The declared goal of the Process until at least the mid-2000s was to prevent 'irregular' migration and to 'establish sustainable systems for regular migration in the wider European region' (ICMPD 2003a). Comparable Regional Consultative Processes (RCPs) also existed in the mid-2000s, for instance, the Bali Process, which was founded in 2002 for Asia and Australia, and the Puebla Process or the Regional Conference on Migration (RCM) for the American continent (see Klein Solomon 2005; Georgi 2019: 234, 262; Bali Process 2004; RCM 2004).

Since 1994, as the secretariat, the ICMPD has been responsible for the organisation and preparation of the content of the conferences, working groups and consultations that are part of the Budapest Process. The Process itself began in October 1991, when

then German Minister of the Interior Wolfgang Schäuble convened a Ministerial Conference in Berlin with representatives from 26 states to discuss measures against the increasing 'illegal' East–West migration. This conference was one of the first attempts to establish a coordinated policy covering a wide geographical area to control East–West migration in Europe:

'[T]his was one of the first initiatives at that time of such a character. To actually bring Ministers of Interior, border guards, people who were dealing with prevention and control of illegal migration and to put them together and discuss this potential big threat of an inflow – which never happened!'

(Interview Alexandrova 2004)

The final document, which was written in fairly general terms, appealed to states to develop short, medium and long-term strategies to enable legal migration within Europe. Visa policy and border controls were to be the initial focus of cooperation (Ministerial Conference 1991).

The subsequent meeting on the implementation of the recommendations, better known as the Berlin Process, led in 1993 to the Ministerial Conference in Budapest, which was organised by the Hungarian government. Representatives of 35 European governments adopted a conference statement which included many more extensive and varied recommendations than two years before in Berlin. The overall orientation of the document was, in line with the prevailing pattern of the early 1990s, defensive and restrictive. It was aimed primarily at preventing and curbing migration. The focus of the recommendations was once again visa and border controls, but also information exchange, repatriation agreements and the criminalisation of 'irregular' migration through sanctions against people 'traffickers', transport companies and migrants (Ministerial Conference 1993).

There was more than just these two conferences, however. Several working groups and an executive committee – the Budapest Group chaired by Hungary – were established to facilitate cooperation on the implementation of the recommendations that had been adopted. What made the Budapest Process unique, and this is something that has been recognised by Western European governments and the European Commission, was its 'informal and flexible character' (ICMPD 2003a). This informal nature meant, on the one hand, that no binding decisions were taken. On the other hand, the organisation was able to avoid the 'institutional and administrative restrictions'

(ICMPD 2000: 14) and, to a certain extent, also the public scrutiny that would have been inescapable had the Process involved more binding outcomes with concrete practical implications (Interview Widgren 2004). In this way, the Budapest Process helped integrate the Central and Eastern European states, and increasingly also the CIS states and Europe's Mediterranean neighbours into the European migration regime (see Hofmann et al. 2004: 95–96; Interview Alexandrova 2004).

In June 1997, another Ministerial Conference took place, this time in Prague. As reported in the interviews conducted for this study, the Prague conference was seen as an overwhelming success. It can be considered a crucial point, not only for the development of the Budapest Process and the ICMPD, but for the European migration regime as a whole. For the EU accession candidates, the conference and the follow-up meetings were instrumental in the implementation of the Schengen acquis and other regulations related to migration:

'The '97 Prague recommendations – this is one of the most comprehensive documents adopted with relation to migration because it covers basically everything. It covers asylum, it covers border management, it covers migration, it covers return, trafficking. Everything. It is a set of 55 recommendations which go through the whole migration picture. And at that time, it was one of the first documents of that type.'

(Interview Alexandrova 2004; see Ministerial Conference 1997)

By 2003, almost 100 working group sessions and annual meetings of the Budapest Group had taken place within the framework of the Budapest Process. Then, in June 2003, after multiple delays, the fourth Ministerial Conference took place in Rhodes. The conference resulted in a change in direction, both in terms of content and geography, with the Process shifting towards the CIS states, financed by the European Commission. This reorientation had become necessary. The original goal of the Budapest Process, which was to control 'irregular' migration movements from and through Central and Eastern Europe by incorporating the contries in this region into the EU and the Schengen regime, had been achieved with some degree of success. Thus, the justification for its continued existence was repeatedly questioned (Ministerial Conference of Rhodes 2003a, 2003b)[15]. In 2004, the Budapest Process was expanded to include the CIS region. On the ICMPD website, this is currently presented under the subheading 'Migration challenges in the Silk Routes region' (ICMPD 2025a).

[15] 'It goes without saying that this is also openly discussed. We shouldn't be preserving something that's no longer needed. The very question that is being asked is: Is it still necessary? [...] If in St Petersburg, which is where this year's Budapest meeting is taking place, someone says: "Ok, what we have had so far is not working; the Budapest Process no longer makes sense, this is not the way", then we will stop' (Interview Gehrke/Pluim 2004). Also see the minutes of the Budapest Group meetings (Budapest Group 2001: 2; ibid. 2002b: 2).

The Function of the ICMPD for the Budapest Process

As mentioned above, the Budapest Process is also referred to in the Agreement on the Establishment of the ICMPD. The organisation will only accept new members if they support the principles of the Budapest Process (Agreement on the Establishment of the ICMPD 1993: 5)[16]. It was therefore hardly surprising that, shortly after it was founded, the ICMPD was officially designated the secretariat of the Budapest Process, a role which it continues to have to this day. Exactly what this function meant in reality in the mid-2000s is illustrated by the following quote from an interview with a member of ICMPD's staff:

''It means drafting papers, preparing the meetings – on the practical side. [...] For every meeting that is organized there is a background document. This is what we prepare here. And on the other hand, you have the practical arrangements for the meeting. This is also done from here together with the hosting state. And then you have all the political background, all the contacts, all the state contacts, all the contacts with the European Commission and with other international organisations which basically is done here. So to say, the formal leader of the process is Hungary. And you have states leading each of the working groups. But the actual work is done in the secretariat. Everything which is related to the political and the practical substantial preparation is done here."

(Interview Alexandrova 2004)

Besides the practical preparations for individual meetings – invitations, accommodation, conference venues – which had to be organised in conjunction with the host country, the ICMPD also served political functions. The organisation's staff wrote background papers, agendas and draft resolutions. They made proposals and initiated projects. Although the ICMPD repeatedly emphasised that it was the states that determined the content of its activities and that the ICMPD had no agenda of its own, the secretariat work of the organisation did influence the agenda, albeit indirectly:

'Well, obviously you have an influence. You have an influence on many things. You draft the agenda, invite the participants. This is, so to say, the political heart of the process. And of course there are ways to influence. Nobody could argue: "No, no. no. We just organize the meetings." That's not it – but that is not the main element. And that is what this organization stands for. It is a facilitator. It helps governments.'

(Interview Alexandrova 2004)

[16] In the third amending agreement from 2003, however, this clause was removed. This was done to make it easier to accept new members and because the Vienna and the Berlin Processes no longer existed (Agreement on the Third Amendment to the ICMPD Agreement 2003).

By writing agendas, putting together background reports and proposing activities, the ICMPD structured political debates within the framework of the Budapest Process, and in emphasising or ignoring certain aspects, it did increase the likelihood of a certain outcome. It is impossible to quantify the ICMPD's influence. What can be said, however, is that in light of its secretariat function and the contacts and discussions that resulted from this, the ICMPD has had an important and relevant impact on the specifics of the development and structure of the European migration regime in the context of the Budapest Process.

4. Expansion and New Activities (1997–2003)

"In my view, there is no getting away from the fact that things that end up as part of the political mainstream in two years' time are things that have already been discussed here and, albeit with some resistance, are repeatedly on the agenda. The question for me is: Is it the [ICMPD's] foresight, or do other people just come up with the same ideas irrespectively?[17]"

Lukas Gehrke, former ICMPD Project Officer Policy Development

European Migration Policy at the Turn of the Millennium

In Germany and many other EU member states, the years between 1997 and 2001 were characterised by discussions about the 'New Economy', 'humanitarian interventions' and 'modern governance' (for a while 13 of the then 15 EU states had social democratic governments). One element of this modern form of governance was the acceptance of migration as an inherent part of society. The limited capacity of states to prevent migration altogether had been acknowledged, at least rhetorically. Instead, as a phenomenon, migration was understood as something to be controlled, as a problem that needed to be managed. The 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam and, even more so, the special EU Summit meeting held in Tampere in October 1999 were an expression of this recognition. This represented a turning point in the development of the European migration regime (Hofmann et al. 2004: 107–110)[18]. At the Tampere Summit, the EU governments set, among others, the following migration policy goals:

- Create a common European asylum system;
- 'Fairly' integrate third-country nationals and adopt anti-discrimination legislation;
- Manage all phases of the migration process;
- Incorporate migration policy into relations with migrants' countries of origin and conclude readmission agreements;
- Combat human trafficking and smuggling;
- Harmonise visa application processes (Hofmann et al. 2004: 108).

[17] Interview Gehrke/Pluim 2004.

[18] The Amsterdam Treaty communitised large areas of migration policy. The integration of the Schengen regime into EU structures is a higher-level manifestation of the principle of integration previously seen in the Maastricht Treaty, the difference being that the Schengen regime initially aimed to integrate intergovernmental migration policy institutions into the European Community. Even more important than this, however, was the decision to transfer the policy areas of asylum, visas, third-country nationals and 'illegal migration' to the European Communities (the first pillar of the EU) by 30 April 2004. Specifically, this meant that the Commission was granted the sole right of initiative, while decisions in these policy areas were made by the Council of Ministers for Justice and Home Affairs and subject to a majority agreement. This meant that the third pillar had fewer areas of responsibility, including cooperation between the police, customs and the judicial authorities (Hofmann et al. 2004: 107–110).

It is impossible to determine exactly how much influence the ICMPD had on this shift away from a paradigm of defence to a strategy of 'migration management'. Even the ICMPD employees I interviewed for this study generally refrained from passing judgement on the relative significance of the organisation. With the ratification of the Treaties of Amsterdam and Tampere, however, the measures Jonas Widgren and the ICMPD had advocated for many years became official EU policy: joint migration and integration policy; the establishment of common European institutions for asylum and visa applications; and the incorporation of migration and return policy into relations with countries of transit and origin – steps toward a comprehensive migration management as understood by the ICMPD. The principles developed in Tampere were initially intended to be objectives and not actual policy. Nevertheless, they marked a policy shift and showed that the positions taken by the ICMPD had become part of the political mainstream (Interview Gehrke/Pluim 2004).

When it came to the decisions adopted in Tampere, the 'Strategy paper on immigration and asylum policy', circulated by the incoming Austrian EU Presidency on the first day of its term in July 1998 (European Council 1998), lent the process crucial political momentum. The strategy paper, which was actually not meant for public distribution but had been leaked, stated that European migration policy had failed as it had neither succeeded in staving off the 'enormous influx of refugees' from the Bosnian War, nor had it managed to substantially curb 'illegal' migration. Migration policy was described as crisis-ridden and the member states as unprepared and virtually powerless in the face of the allegedly imminent wave of mass migration to Western Europe from the increasingly impoverished regions of the world. Today, in the mid-2020s, many of the ideas set out in the strategy paper are once again at the centre of migration policy debates in Europe. Three of the proposals made in this highly controversial paper, which was subsequently revised multiple times, are outlined below.

First, the 'root causes of immigration', a term heavily used today by governments and political elites, were to be tackled in the countries of origin, not through changing the trade and economic politicy in the capitalist core countries or the world economic order as a whole (see Buckel/Kopp 2022: 48ff.). Instead, root causes were supposed to be addressed by applying diplomatic, economic and ultimately military pressure on transit countries and countries of origin. Membership of the EU, associated status, closer economic cooperation and development assistance were to be tied to cooperation on the issues of migration control and return of 'illegal' migrants. This

proposal was based on a division of the world into 'concentric circles', with the European Union at the centre, surrounded by a circle of potential new members. The third circle comprised the European CIS countries and non-European Mediterranean neighbours, which would be bound to the EU through cooperation and association agreements, with no prospect of EU accession. The fourth and outermost circle encompassed the remaining world regions that were important for the EU from a migration policy perspective, first and foremost the Middle East, China and Southern Africa (European Council 1998; Müller 2000).

Second, the Austrian strategy paper proposed the creation of 'regional protection areas' in the event of crises where refugees could receive the support they needed close to the crisis region, preventing them from continuing on to Western Europe. During the Kosovo War, this strategy was implemented for the first time with the establishment of refugee camps in Macedonia and Albania and roadblocks to prevent people leaving the region (see Dietrich/Glöde 1999). Since then, this concept has frequently been the subject of debate. In spring 2003, the British Home Secretary David Blunkett proposed what was known as the 'safe haven' concept that would see asylum seekers in Europe deported to camps outside the EU pending a decision on their individual cases (see The Guardian 2004). In July 2004, a similar discussion ensued after the German Minister of the Interior Otto Schily called for reception camps for refugees in North Africa (see Süddeutsche Zeitung 2004).

Lastly, the strategy paper stated that the Geneva Refugee Convention should be supplemented, amended or replaced (European Council 1998). Instead of the individual right to asylum, the paper proposed that there should be more flexible quotas for certain countries of origin, as there had been during the inter-war period. The strategy paper stated the following:

'In this case the question actually arises as to whether a new approach should not also include initial steps harking back to the beginnings of the development of asylum law when the affording of protection was not seen as a subjective individual right but rather as a political offer on the part of the host country. Such an approach would allow potential reception and protection States to come up with their offers in a much more flexible and speedy way in certain circumstances [...]. A new direction of this kind can only be implemented on the basis of a Convention supplementing, amending or replacing the Geneva Convention'

(European Council 1998; see Müller 2000)

What the strategy failed to mention was the fact that this was the very type of political act of grace on the part of the reception countries that prevented European Jews and other victims of National Socialism from fleeing, ultimately leading to the deaths of millions (see Marrus 1999). In a speech held in October 1998, Widgren spoke in positive terms about the strategy paper, applauding, in reference to the Kosovo crisis, 'the comprehensive prevention plan, the provisional safeguards and the burden-sharing in this excellent Austrian strategy paper' (Widgren 1998b: 5). Widgren rejected the fierce criticism of the paper:

'This criticism is, however, unfair, as it does not address the content of the paper, i.e. the requirements for a common European migration policy for the next generation that focuses, in equal measure, on stopping deportation (by means of political prevention and human rights campaigns), on border controls in an enlarged Europe, and on the harmonious integration of regular immigrants'

(Widgren 1998b: 3).

Rather than see the Geneva Refugee Convention abolished, Widgren sought the establishment of a common European regime for dealing with refugees. Although the Austrian strategy paper cannot be seen as being entirely in line with the ICMPD's positions, Widgren's positive reference to the paper does allow us to draw conclusions about his personal viewpoints as well as those of the ICMPD at large.

The Austrian Forum for Migration Studies and Other Research Projects

The Austrian Forum for Migration Studies (Österreichisches Forum für Migrationsstudien, ÖFM) was not an independent institute as the name suggests but rather an ICMPD project run by staff in the Research and Documentation Department. The ÖFM, which was created in late 1997, was originally intended to be a three-year project. Financed by the Austrian Ministry of Interior and the Swiss Foundation for Population, Migration and Environment, the project aimed 'to establish an interdisciplinary documentation, information and research centre to promote cooperation between all actors working in the field of migration research in German-speaking countries, especially in Austria' (ÖFM 2003). The ÖFM had four areas of work:

- Preparing, documenting and publishing data relevant to migration
- Providing information for the research community, government agencies and NGOs
- Promoting cooperation within the research community as well as between researchers and practitioners
- Conducting contract research, especially on the impact of migration from Eastern Europe and the counties of the CIS on Austria.[19]

Probably the most important of the ÖFM's publications was the first Austrian Migration and Integration Report (Fassmann/Stacher 2003). This edited volume comprised 42 contributions on issues relating to migration and integration in Austria and, at the time, was the most comprehensive publication on this topic to date. The publication of the report proved to be a huge success for the ICMPD. During the 2003 vote on the ICMPD becoming a permanent organisation, the report was cited in the Austrian parliament (Nationalrat) as evidence of just how valuable the Centre was for Austria (Dobnigg 2003). Another project was the 'integration portal', a website set up in 2001 that aimed to provide government agencies, the research community and NGOs with easier access to relevant information, advisory bodies and projects, but also with a view to helping migrants, refugees and asylum seekers obtain information. The website included a wide variety of Austria-wide institutions and services organised by topic, type of information and target group. In 2000, the project was renewed for a further three years before the ÖFM's funding came to an end in 2003 (Interview Jandl 2004). The ÖFM can essentially be described as an 'ICMPD for Austria'.

The ÖFM was just one of many research projects conducted by the ICMPD between 1997 and 2003. The spectrum of topics the ICMPD covered during its second phase of development ranged from organised crime to migration, from the migration of Roma to the COMPSTAT statistical project, the primary focus being return and deportation policy[20]. Such research projects were mainly paid for by the European Commission

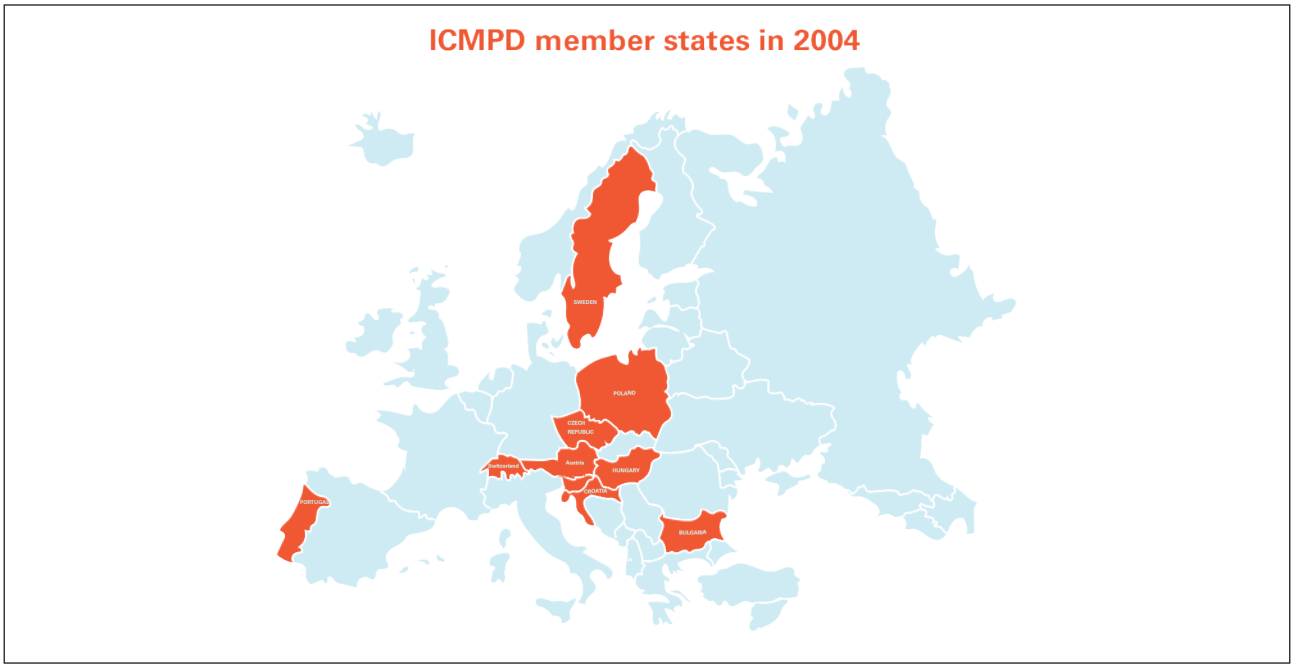
[19] The ÖFM's publications included the following studies: 'The effects of the EU's eastward enlargement on immigration to the European Union with a particular focus on Austria' (Auswirkungen der EU-Osterweiterung auf die Zuwanderung in die Europäische Union unter besonderer Berücksichtigung Österreichs) (ICMPD/ÖFM 1998); 'The level of qualification of Slovenian, Czech and Hungarian labour migrants and their position on the Austrian labour market' (Qualifikationsniveau von slowenischen, tschechischen und ungarischen Arbeitsmigrant*innen und ihre Position am österreichischen Arbeitsmarkt) (ICMPD/ÖFM 1999a); 'Impact of the EU Enlargement on Justice and Home Affairs Issues – The cases of Austria/Hungary, Austria/Czech Republic and Austria/Slovenia' (ICMPD/ÖFM 1999b)..

[20] A selection of publications listed on the website of the ICMPD's Research Department in 2004 gives an idea of the research priorities during this period (on this, see ICMPD/ÖFM 1999c; ICMPD 2004t): Registration for Temporary Protection Status, based on the Reception of Refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina (study commissioned and funded by the European Commission; 300 pages; March 1999); The Relationship between Organized Crime and Trafficking in Aliens (study conducted in the framework of the Budapest Process; 33 pages; June 1999); Rape is a War Crime: How to Support the Survivors. Lessons from Bosnia – Strategies for Kosovo (conference report, June 1999, 177 pages); Return of Illegal Migrants: The Effectiveness of Readmission Agreements (study conducted within the framework of the Budapest Process, September 1999, 48 pages); Current Irregular Roma Migration to the EU Member States (study and conference; funded by the European Commission, Norway and Switzerland; 2000/2001); EU Repatriation Policies and Practices (final project report; funded by the European Refugee Fund; January 2002); Comparing National Data Sources in the Field of Migration and Integration – COMPSTAT (the compstat.org portal provided comparative migration statistics on eight European countries; funded by the European Commission; online 2001–2003); Study on Return – A Swiss Perspective (research commissioned and funded by the Swiss Federal Office for Refugees; January 2003).

and individual member states. Additionally, more practical research projects also came about within the framework of the Budapest Process.

The Integration of Central and Eastern Europe into the Migration Regime

One of the key functions, if not the single most important task of the ICMPD in its first decade was to integrate the countries of Central and Eastern Europe into the European migration regime and, in connection with this, prepare for the EU's eastward enlargement. Within the framework of the Budapest Process, with its individual projects and, in particular, direct support for its Eastern European member states (Hungary, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Poland, Bulgarian, Croatia and Slovakia), the ICMPD contributed to the expansion of the European border regime and the implementation of the Schengen acquis. Prior to official negotiations on accession, in particular, the Budapest Process was the only forum where policymakers and civil servants, whose chief remit was migration policy, came together:



'This is exactly why the Budapest Process exists. The main countries, the majority of countries that pay for the Budapest Proces s, they are the ones that meet anyway. But in '97 or '93, there was no other forum for sitting down with the Hungarians. Or with the Romanians, etc. This just didn't happen. This was preparation for the whole accession process. The Schengen acquis was discussed in its entirety. Years ago. At a time when it was

not even on the agenda yet, before the official negotiations had even begun, the Budapest Process was already discussing this process of harmonisation. [...] The Prague Conference in 1997 was crucial, if we look at the recommendations that are in there'

(Interview Gehrke/Pluim 2004)

It was not only within the framework of the Budapest Process, however, that the ICMPD dealt with issues relating to migration in connection with eastward enlargement. In fact, alongside three research projects for Austria on the impact of eastward enlargement on migration, the economy and domestic policy (ICMPD/ÖFM 1998, 1999a, 1999b), the ICMPD was also involved in a variety of training projects for Eastern European civil servants and border guards.

Following negotiations with the European Commission in autumn 1998 (Widgren 1998b: 4), the ICMPD organised the first introductory seminars on border control in line with Schengen standards for the border police of all accession countries (ICMPD 2004w). The seminars were funded through the European Commission's Odysseus Programme, which financed the technical upgrading of the EU's new eastern borders (Dietrich 2003: 5 and fn. 20).

Between September 2001 and April 2002, the ICMPD conducted, within the framework of the Budapest Process, seminars for civil servants from the accession countries on effective acquisition of information on the country of origin. Such Country of Origin Information (COI) comprises administrative knowledge about the situation in asylum seekers' countries of origin. The information is intended to provide a basis for assessing whether a request for asylum should be granted and whether a return to the country of origin is legally possible for rejected asylum seekers. The ICMPD's seminars aimed to create specialised departments for COI research in the participating states or to improve those that already existed, with a view to increase state capacities to regulate the growing number of people seeking asylum in Eastern Europe. The idea was that precise COI would contribute to fast and 'fair' asylum decisions, curbing 'abuse' of the asylum system and acting as a deterrent, as the 'stories' told by 'fake refugees' could be scrutinised more closely (ICMPD 2004u).

In conclusion, the ICMPD and its informal praxis contributed in several ways to the implementation of the border regime in Eastern Europe. It provided advice and training and, within the framework of the Budapest Process, it supported informal intergovernmental cooperation. Although this is difficult to substantiate, the informal

provision of advice to the Eastern European members and the countries cooperating with the ICMPD seems to have been more important than individual training projects. All told, the ICMPD played a vital role in the rapid expansion of the EU border regime to Eastern Europe.

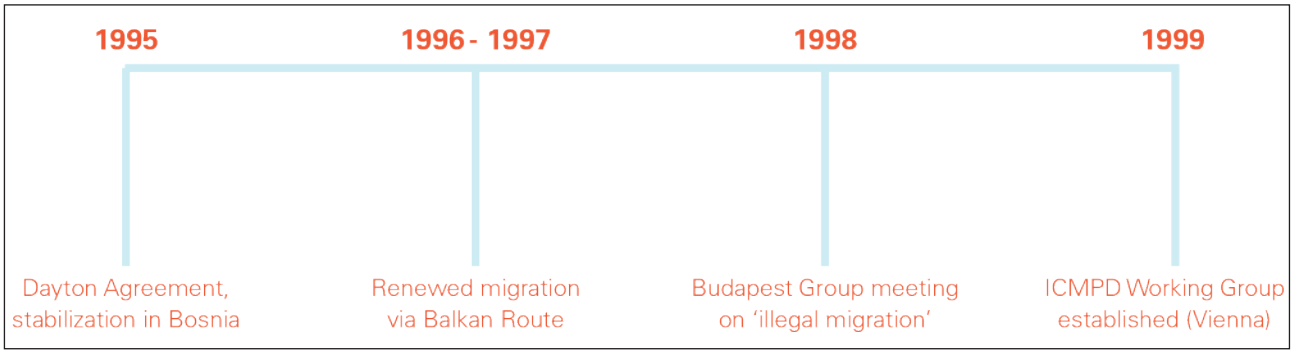
Combatting Uncontrolled Migration in Southeast Europe

In the 1990s and the first half of the 2000s, there were a number of reasons as to why Southeast Europe played a particularly important role for the European migration regime. With the various civil wars that accompanied the dissolution of Yugoslavia during the 1990s, the Balkans became, in the rhetoric of state immigration controls, a region that was a 'source of refugees'. The political and economic instability of the remnants of Yugoslavia and the refusal of governments in the region to cooperate with the EU on migration policy, made it one of the most important transit routes for refugees and illegalised migrants on their way to Western Europe (ICMPD 2000). These were the reasons why the Budapest Process and the ICMPD focused on this region in particular. From November 1995, as a result of the Dayton Agreement, the situation in Bosnia gradually began to stabilise and the refugees living in Western Europe returned, often through forced repatriation, to their destroyed countries. Consequently, migration movements via the 'Balkan Route' increased again from 1996/1997 onwards. On the initiative of the German government, on 29–30 June 1998, an extraordinary meeting of the Budapest Group was convened in Budapest to discuss 'illegal migration' to, through and from Southeast Europe. In view of the increasing numbers of migrants and the anticipated flow of refugees out of Kosovo, the countries in the region were urged to implement the recommendations of the Budapest Process, especially those of the Ministerial Conference in Prague, and to take measures to prevent 'irregular migration' (ICMPD 2000).

The extraordinary meeting of the Budapest Process in June 1998 saw a shift in the development of the Budapest Process, with both the language used and the measures agreed becoming more restrictive (see Dietrich/Glöde 1999: 19). With the Kosovo War well underway and hundreds of thousands of people fleeing, the civil servants involved in the Budapest Group concluded that 'concrete, quick and practical deterrence and prevention measures' (ICMPD 2000: 24) were required. All states should 'work to the utmost' (ibid.) to prevent irregular migration 'to the maximum extent possible' (ibid.). In the end, the decision was made to establish a working group

on 'illegal migration' in Southeast Europe within the framework of the Budapest Process. To provide an impression of the practical dimension of the Budapest Process and the activities it conducted to combat irregular migration, the tasks of the Working Group on the Southeast European Region are described below[21].

After the working group's mandate was defined at the regular sixth meeting of the Budapest Group in December 1998 in Warsaw (Budapest Group 1998), representatives of 18 governments and three international organisations convened the first meeting of the Working Group on the Southeast European Region in Vienna in February 1999. Based on background papers and proposals for the next steps prepared by the ICMPD, a list of 14 possible projects were put forward. Four of these were selected for more detailed investigation: transit controls at Bucharest airport, 'protection' of the Black Sea coastline, controls on the land border between Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the establishment of a common system for the exchange of information on 'illegal migration' for all countries in the region (ICMPD 2000: 5).



The results of this first round of investigations, which involved the ICMPD throughout, were presented at the working group's second meeting in Istanbul in October 1999 and were considered useful and innovative by participating states. The Black Sea study, for instance, came to the conclusion that irregular migration via the Black Sea is in fact insignificant, whereas overland migration in the neighbouring countries was on the rise. According to the findings of the second study, the reason Bucharest Airport in Romania had become a hub for 'illegal migration' not due to organisational and technical shortcomings but because of the low wages of airport officials and the resulting corruption. The analysis of the border between Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina emphasised that establishing the Bosnian border control units was a matter of urgency and that this would require significant financial and organisational support from Western European states (ICMPD 2000: 5–8)[22].

[21] In essence, this description is based on a report that the ICMPD wrote for a meeting of the working group in Skopje in November 2000. This is a highly interesting document in which the process of expanding the European border regime is described in unusual detail (see ICMPD 2000).

[22] In the nine months that followed, a border control system financed by Austria and the European Commission was indeed set up in Bosnia-Herzegovina. By way of supporting the reconstruction of border controls, the ICMPD provided an analysis of the situation and trained the future heads of Bosnia's border police (ICMPD 2000: 62–70).

In summary, the outcome of the working group's second meeting was the decision to examine three new hubs of irregular migration: Tirana Airport, the maritime border between Albania and Italy, and the land border between Romania and Moldova. In line with the established practice, over the course of the year 2000, expert missions were deployed to the relevant locations and their reports presented at the working group's third meeting in Skopje in November 2000. The findings showed that infrastructure at Tirana Airport was outdated. In particular, its lack of a modern border control system was criticised. The problem of 'illegal migration' between Albania and Italy, the study found, was not the sea route, which already had 'constructive' controls, but rather the lack of land controls on entry to Albania from Greece, Macedonia, Montenegro and Kosovo (ICMPD 2000: 8–9; Budapest Process Working Group SEE 2000). In response, in 2002/2003, the European Commission financed an ICMPD project which aimed to improve and better equip the Albanian border regime. The Albanian authorities were provided with international consultants in the form of an 'International Border Police Task Force'. Moreover, the ICMPD developed a 'masterplan' for strengthening Albania's 'border management' (ICMPD 2003b).

These measures, some of which have been outlined here, sought to integrate all countries of Southeast Europe, especially Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia and Serbia-Montenegro, into Europe's migration control regime. The approach that had long been taken for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe within the framework of the Budapest Process and the EU accession negotiations was now to be applied to Southeast Europe and the Balkan region. Again, migration policy was to be brought in line with EU requirements. This included the following:

- Border controls that meet the standards set out in the Schengen acquis;
- Immigration legislation and laws on foreigners based on the EU acquis;
- Functioning authorities for all matters concerning foreigners, immigration and citizenship;
- Readmission agreements, especially with Western European destination countries;
- Adaptation of visa requirements to the Schengen list[23];
- Harsher penalties for document fraud, the transport of irregular migrants and human trafficking;
- Exchange of in formation between the police and border protection of the relevant

[23] The EU wanted to see a restrictive visa policy in place in all the countries affected. For instance, up until 2000, Iranian and Turkish citizens did not require a visa to enter Bosnia, which facilitated their 'irregular' entry into Western Europe (ICMPD 2000: 13).

individual states through Interpol, Europol, CIREFI[24] and the International Border Police Conference (Siófok Process)[25].

The implementation of these recommendations by the Budapest Process Working Group on the Southeast European Region was supported by the ICMPD through numerous projects, one being a training programme for border officials from Croatia and Macedonia between August 2000 and May 2001, which tied into the seminars on the Schengen acquis for EU accession candidates (ICMPD 2004l). A similar project was organised for Turkey from November 2000 to March 2001 (ICMPD 2004y). Another example was the cooperation between the Budapest Process and the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe on combatting 'irregular migration' (ICMPD 2004m).

The common purpose of all these activities centred on Southeast Europe was to analyse the refugee routes and channels of 'uncontrolled migration' to prevent 'irregular' entry into Western Europe. The aforementioned Southeast Europe Working Group set up by the Budapest Process represented an informal and flexible aspect of the response of European migration policy to the changes in migration routes. Thus, the ICMPD did play an important role in this 'destruction of refugee routes' (Dietrich/Glöde 1999: 15).

Source Country Information System (SCIS)

The SCIS was primarily an information system developed and run by the ICMPD that was designed to support states in processing applications for asylum, deportations and visa applications. Until the mid-2000s, it was the most operational and practical component of the ICMPD's work.

The basic idea behind the SCIS was to set up ICMPD offices in asylum seekers' countries of origin that would operate for a few years. The purpose of these offices was to collect information that would be useful in processing applications for asylum or

[24] The Centre for Information, Discussion and Exchange on the Crossing of Frontiers and Immigration (CIREFI) was a body etablished by the [EU Council] in November 1994 to study 'legal migration so as to prevent irregular migration and unlawful residence, in effectively combating immigration crime, in better detecting forged documents and in improving expulsion practice' (European Commission 2025). It was incorporated into Frontex in 2009 (ibid.).

[25] The International Border Police Conference (IBPC), also known as the 'Siófok Process', which still exists to this day, is a cooperation structure similar to the Budapest Process within which the border protection units of European but also non-European countries work on the strengthening and coordinating of border control procedures. The aim of the IBPC is to help the border police to harmonise their work and be more aligned. In the mid-2000s, the IBPC had its own secretariat in Hungary. The ICMPD supported the Process and later also the IBPC itself by providing secretariat services and an office in Budapest. It was an active participant in several working groups (Interview Gehrke/Pluim 2004; Widgren 2001a: 8–9; Budapest Group 2001: 2; 2001: 3). The IBPC can be described as the operational level of international cooperation on migration control.

the deportation of asylum seekers whoms applications had been rejected. The ICMPD justified the need for this project by pointing out that the asylum procedures sometimes dragged on for years or deportations could not be carried out because of a lack of reliable and legally accepted information on the situation in asylum seekers' countries of origin. What made the SCIS unique was that it did not provide general situation reports on the country of origin (as in the standard Country of Origin Information) that could be used by the relevant authorities to make a decision on whether to grant asylum or deport a person. Instead, local SCIS staff responded to questions on specific cases and gathered information which could be directly used as evidence – and they performed this service in just a few days or weeks. The ICMPD promised that this would drastically shorten the duration of asylum and deportation procedures (ICMPD 2004f), and in doing, save the target countries' financial resources. The priority, however, was to enforce a 'consistent deportation policy' as a key element of successful migration management. The quote below is from an interview with the head of legal issues at the SCIS and vividly illustrates the procedure and the project concept based on how it was applied in the case of Kosovo:

'We don't do situation reports like Amnesty International or [UN]HCR. They are doing this. We are not duplicating their work. So, most of the countries have a research desk, a country of origin information desk. They [the research desks] get the questions from their colleagues. So, they have their huge libraries and this and that. But they might say, this is something where we will not find the answer in our books and reports. Practical example: you have an applicant in front of you and he says: 'I can't return to Kosovo because I suffer from that illness and it can't be treated where I come from'. All the books and reports will just stop being useful to you. You just won't find the answer in them. Or: 'I'm a Roma, I'm not an Albanian.' The reports will not help you to know whether this person is Roma or not. You have to check on the ground and have to get objective information to support this. So, then this is where they decide to use our services. They send us questions. We here transform or rewrite the questions we receive so that they become, as I said, this yes-no, black-white type proposition. We send it back for their approval. Because they know why they ask the question. We don't know. We don't need to know the context. We don't need to know whether it is an asylum claim or repatriation or development assistance. Totally irrelevant! Because it won't affect the answer because it is a yes or no answer. So, once the questions are approved they are sent to the field, to Kosovo. […] So, these people [the local SCIS staff] would go around with these questions and all the background information they needed in order to answer the question. And they would identify according to the type of question what is the best source of information. That's the whole idea. And according to that, they would go to actually identify this official and ask a question. Write the question down. Type it. Send it back to us. And we send it back, basically, to the state after checking accuracy and this and that'

(Interview Lanoue 2004).

The information collected was subject to strict conditions. The queries submitted by the participating states had to be objective yes/no questions and the response had to come from publicly accessible sources. Additionally, the information had to be legally compliant, i.e. it had to be recognised by the court as evidence in asylum or deportation proceedings (ICMPD/SCIS 2003d). The methodology used for collecting and preparing information was standardised, independent of the region it was being applied in. Data protection was also repeatedly emphasised in the project documentation (ibid.). During the aforementioned interview, the member of SCIS staff responsible for legal issues felt that it was very important to point out that the SCIS is not an espionage organisation, a police unit or intelligence agency but that its purpose is to collect publicly accessible information 'even a 12-year-old' could gather:

'To determine whether a person has a well founded fear of persecution is the task of the decision makers, not ours. This is a difficult question and they try to shift it. So, we didn't answer, we just say: "No, we don't do this! We don't answer. We can not tell you if a person will be persecuted." Again, going back to this idea of an objective proposition. We could do, and this is what we actually do in a case like this, we formulate the question this way: "Are there any reports of incidents against people of Roma ethnic origin in that locality over the last six months?" So, the staff will go to OSCE, for instance: "Do you have any report?" They will look to the UN-police, to UNHCR, or there is a local human rights NGO. "Any reports of that?"'

(Interview Lanoue 2004)

Questions that could not be answered objectively were rejected, for instance whether returning a person to their home village would be traumatic. The members of SCIS staff also had the right to reject a question if their own safety did not appear to be guaranteed (Interview Lanoue 2004). The methodology of the SCIS also comprised other components besides this[26]. One of these – a sophisticated instrument known as the 'Local Knowledge Section' – was described as follows:

'Local Knowledge Section [...] is a web-based inventory of digital photos of well-known landmarks within any target area. These images, provided together with relevant text (questions and answers) are valuable in interview situations, in assisting the verification of an individual's knowledge of any given area or sub-area so covered-'

(ICMPD/SCIS 2004b: 2, emphasis in the original)

[26] Alongside those that have already been described, the SCIS toolkit contained three other elements. Geographical Information Fact Sheets (GIFS) and Topical Information Fact Sheets (TIFS) were not case specific, but rather comprised information on certain areas or cities or on certain topics, such as health, education or border controls, which might be relevant for asylum decisions. The Personal Documents Section provided the member states with samples of original passports, birth certificates and other official documents to determine whether or not an asylum seeker's documents had been forged (ICMPD/SCIS 2004b: 2).

In practice this meant that an asylum seeker's claim that they were from a particular village or had been present in particular locations could be verified on the basis of photos as well as answers to questions submitted.

The Development of the SCIS[27]

The Repatriation Information Centre Bosnia-Herzegovina (RIC), which operated between 1997 and late 1999, was a predecessor project of the SCIS. The target audience and methodology were, however, less specific than in the follow-up project in Kosovo. Having responded to 14,000 queries, the RIC made an important contribution to the ICMPD's efforts to speed up the repatriation of Bosnian refugees (ICMPD 2004o). Immediately after the successful conclusion of the RIC in December 1999, the ICMPD started on its follow-up project the Kosovo Information Project (KIP). From late 1999 to mid-2003, it provided responses to 52,000 queries from 13 European states 'with no verifiable errors' (ICMPD 2004c). Around 237,000 people fled Kosovo from 1998 to the end of the NATO attacks in spring 1999 (Dietrich/Glöde 1999: 44). The KIP/SCIS Kosovo was tailored to the needs of the asylum and return authorities in the destination countries and was partially financed by them through fixed contributions (ICMPD 2004c; ICMPD 2004v; Interview Lanoue 2004). Although the project was portrayed by the ICMPD as extremely successful, the organisation ultimately failed to build on this 'success'.

Despite extensive preparation work, a subsequent project to be implemented in Sri Lanka failed to get off the ground owing to financial issues. The first talks between the ICMPD and the Sri Lankan government on the establishment of the Sri Lanka SCIS began as early as November 2001. When, after countless problems and protracted negotiations in which the British government played a key role, the project finally started its work more than three years later in January 2004, the European Commission rejected an application for follow-up funding for the forecasted amount as the member states saw no apparent need for the project (ICMPD 2004e; ICMPD/SCIS 2004a; Interview Lanoue 2004). The Afghanistan SCIS faced a similar problem. Once the US-led coalition had defeated the Taliban in December 2001, a decision was taken to conduct a feasibility study financed by the EU, which was then carried out in the second half of 2002. Based on this study, the ICMPD submitted a final project proposal in May 2003. The IOM was secured as project partner and Germany was to act as the lead country (ICMPD/SCIS 2003a: 2–3; ibid. 2003b). Following

[27] See ICMPD 2004f, 2004g, 2004h, 2004i.

extensive preparations and with the launch date set for the end of 2003, the European Commission, once again, failed to provide financing:

'The official reason provided by the Commission… I mean we had received very strong indications that it would be accepted, and in the end they had a meeting with the participating states and they realised that there are very little returns happening from the EU to Afghanistan. So, they felt it was not necessary at this time. And then, we saw it differently. We saw it as the chicken and eggs-story. Which comes first? What we argued was that maybe they don't have many returns because they don't have enough information. With more information they would have more returns. But they said: "Oh wow, we don't have a lot of return, we don't need information". But who is right, who is wrong? I think we are, but we didn't get the funding.'

(Interview Lanoue 2004; see ICMPD 2004k)

The ICMPD argued that the destination countries of refugees from Sri Lanka and Afghanistan would, with the SCIS information they received, have been in a position to deport more people more quickly. With the Commission's decision not to finance the Afghanistan SCIS and the discontinuation of the Sri Lanka SCIS in 2006, a project the UK had temporarily financed on its own, the ICMPD's SCIS activities were effectively discontinued.

In 2004, there were still numerous proposals and fundamental interest among the states involved in expanding the activities to include other countries. In 2004, for example, discussions took place on the matter of extending activities to Africa, a feasibility study was then conducted for Somalia and the use of the SCIS for visa applications in Serbia and Montenegro reviewed (ICMPD/SCIS 2003d). However, concrete projects were not forthcoming. Further ideas were published in the discussion paper Migration and Security – the Role of the SCIS (ICMPD/SCIS 2003c). One of the proposals mentioned in this document concerned the verification of third-country nationals resident in the EU.

'Verification of data related to current residents originating from various source countries. This (re-)evaluation of the status of current residents, after their entry to the country of destination, is of increasing importance to concerned governments. […] SCIS Information Requests would represent a practical and powerful tool for scrutinising the data previously provided on entry by the individual in question for completeness and accuracy, primarily but not only in case of a security concerns'

(ICMPD/SCIS 2003c: 1–2, emphasis in original).

Essentially, the method proposed meant that information that had been provided on entry to the country by foreigners who had since been residing there legally could be re-checked, years later. This method was intended to be used 'primarily but not only in case of a security concerns'. In his interview, the head of legal issues at the SCIS was reluctant to describe this practice as carrying out 'security checks', emphasising that it was no more than an idea presented in a discussion paper (Interview Lanoue 2004). It was exactly this type of proposal, along with the irrefutable practice on the part of ICMPD staff – within the context of the SCIS – of gathering information and posing questions with the aim of supporting more deportations and implementing other government measures that created the impression that the ICMPD was conducting police work.

The ICMPD's expansion phase from 1997 to 2003 brought the organisation into the centre of European migration policy. It implemented numerous research projects on problems related to Austrian and European migration policy and conducted applied research for the member states; it collaborated with almost all European countries as well as Australia, Canada and the US and concluded cooperation agreements with all the major international organisations involved in migration issues, including IOM, UNHCR, ILO and Interpol.

Within the Budapest Process as well as through its own educational projects, the ICMPD played an instrumental role in preparing the EU's eastward enlargement and in establishing the Schengen regime in Eastern Europe. It was actively involved in attacking the illegalised movements of migrants and refugees through Southeast Europe. In creating the SCIS, the ICMPD established an 'innovative' approach to increase the number of deportations to Bosnia, Kosovo, Sri Lanka and other countries.

5. Consolidation and Reorientation (2003–2004)

> *"I'll simply state facts here: the ICMPD, which is, of course, heavily dependent on the Director General, in other words on Jonas Widgren – this is undeniable – is now gradually transitioning from an exploratory phase to a phase of consolidation. And maybe even gradually growing up."*
>
> *Gottfried Zürcher in 2004, then Deputy Director of the ICMPD,*[28]

European Migration Policy in the mid-2000s

For decades, the Iron Curtain divided Europe, preventing any large-scale migration movements, or at least making them extremely difficult. As few as 15 years after the Iron Curtain fell, the first round of eastward enlargement had been completed and the Schengen regime, a unified system of border controls in Western and Eastern Europe, had been created, at least in theory. The formally communitised asylum policy and, to some extent, also migration policy, had resulted in a degree of integration that seemed hardly imaginable a decade earlier. As stated in the 1999 Austrian strategy paper, the bilateral Association Agreements between the EU, the western CIS states and the majority of Mediterranean countries – including the 'all-important' migration control and repatriation agreements – integrated these countries into the European migration and border regime. Finally, the paradigm of a migration policy marked by defensivemeasures,which had prevailed well into the mid-1990s and was particularly evident in the asylum system reforms implemented at the beginning of the decade, had been superseded by 'offensive' migration management.

The transition from the second to the third phase of the ICMPD's development is characterised by the third amendment to the ICMPD Agreement. The amendment agreement was signed on 25 June 2003 in Rhodes, where on the same day the fourth Ministerial Conference of the Budapest Process was taking place (Agreement on the Third Amendment to the ICMPD Agreement 2003a, 2003b). The resultant state treaty removed the limited term of the ICMPD for good, making it easier for new members to be accepted. This provided the organisation with the foundation for a long-term future and thus the security that allowed it to change its strategic direction. This shift in direction is discussed in the following section which looks at changes in

[28] Interview Zürcher 2004.

organisational and membership structure as well as the expansion of the geographical scope of the organisation's activities and its future prospects.

Restructuring and New Members

In early 2002, the ICMPD Steering Committee initiated a discussion process on the aims and future development of the organisation. It can be assumed that the start of this reorientation process was at least in part influenced by the foreseeable end of the ICMPD agreement and the first round of the EU's eastward enlargement in May 2004. At the Steering Committee meeting in Bled, Slovenia, in September 2002, an unpublished Strategic Development Plan was discussed, which, as far as can be ascertained from various sources, contained three key elements: first, a change in direction for the organisation's activities; second, internal restructuring; and third, a commitment to accept new members (see ICMPD 2004p: 3–5).

The change in direction for the ICMPD's activities was less of a policy shift than an intentional prioritisation. The amendment agreement signed in June 2003 set out the main areas of focus for the ICMPD's work (Agreement on the Third Amendment to the ICMPD Agreement 2003a: 1). The ICMPD was to:

1. Contribute to the development of innovative, comprehensive and internationally coordinated approaches to addressing the challenges of migration;
2. Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of states' migration management;
3. Foster regional and international migration policy cooperation between countries of origin and transit and destination countries;
4. Develop strategies to combat all forms of irregular migration;
5. Support the establishment of sustainable and comprehensive systems for regulated migration;
6. Simplify international exchange of migration data and statistics.

These six points encompass the most important elements of European migration management according to Widgren and the ICMPD. 'Combatting irregular migration' by means of border controls, visa policy and 'return policy' (point 4) in combination with the establishment of a regime for regular immigration (point 5) were the two key strategies, with an emphasis on efficiency (point 2) and the need for international cooperation (points 1 and 3). It is rather telling that the matter of statistics is

highlighted under point 6, given the much-discussed lack of comparable and reliable data on ('irregular') migration and integration – a major obstacle to 'efficient' migration control.

The internal restructuring took effect in March 2003 and, along with issues related to economic and administrative rigour, mainly concerned the restructuring of the ICMPD's activities. Four departments were created: Policy Development, Consultancy Services, Information Systems, and Human and Financial Resources (ICMPD 2004p: 3). At the time that the Strategic At the time that the Strategic Development Plan was being discussed in September 2002, the ICMPD had five member states (Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, Slovenia and the Czech Republic). Over the following two years, it managed to attract six new members: Sweden (November 2002), Bulgaria (April 2003), Portugal (early summer 2003), Poland (December 2003) and Croatia (January 2004). In February 2006, following protracted negotiations, Slovakia became the organisation's 11th member (ICMPD 2004p: 4).

- **Switzerland** (1993)
- **Austria** (1993)
- **Hungary** (1995)
- **Slovenia** (1998)
- **Czech Republic** (2001)
- **Sweden** (2002)
- **Bulgaria** (2003)
- **Portugal** (2003)
- **Poland** (2003)
- **Croatia** (2004)
- **Slovakia** (2006)
- **Romania** (2011)
- **Bosnia-Herzegowina** (2012)
- **Serbia** (2014)
- **North Macedonia** (2015)
- **Turkye** (2018)
- **Malta** (2018)
- **Germany** (2020)
- **Greece** (2021)
- **Netherlands** (2023)
- **Ireland** (2024)

The ICMPD was founded in 1993 and sought to achieve policy development in relation to the new patterns of East–West migration. With the first round of eastward enlargement completed in May 2004, the second round on the horizon (January 2007) and the Balkans largely stable, the original aims of the ICMPD had to a great extent been achieved. This outcome meant that in 2003/2004, the organisation needed to identify a new geographical focus, something that was evident from several of its projects.

Budapest Process

In the mid-1990s, the Budapest Process played a vital role because civil servants, practitioners and politicians from Eastern and Western Europe whose chief remit was migration policy had very few opportunities to exchange ideas and information apart from the Budapest forum. The conclusion of the first round of the EU's eastward enlargement in 2004 and the imminent accession of Bulgaria and Romania placed the Budapest Process under pressure to defend its legitimacy (Interview Gehrke/Pluim 2004). Accordingly, from March 2004, the European Commission, within the framework of the High Level Working Group (HLWG), called for the Budapest Process to be extended to include all CIS states. This meant that all former Soviet Republics, which up till then were not yet members of the Budapest Process, were to be integrated into its structures. Furthermore, a forum was established in which civil servants and politicians from the CIS states were to initiate a process of cooperation among themselves, the declared objective being to integrate the CIS, a key region of origin and transit for refugees and illegalised migrants, into the European migration control regime (Interview Alexandrova 2004). As a result, from 2004 on, the focus of the ICMPD shifted to the expansion of the European migration and border regime to the CIS region, and thereby to Central Asia.

A new element of this phase was the cooperation between the Budapest Process and the Bali Process. The latter is a regional consultation process, similar to the Budapest Process. In the mid-2000s, the membership of the Bali Process, which focuses on informal migration policy cooperation in Asia, included 42 countries ranging from Iraq to New Zealand (Interview Widgren 2004; see Bali Process 2004). Another project undertaken during this phase was a study comparing the Australian asylum system with the asylum systems in the US, Canada and six European countries which was financed by the Australian government and, starting in early 2003, has been managed by the ICMPD. This was the first time the organisation had managed to secure funding for one of its own projects from a non-European country (ICMPD 2004p: 11).

Dialogue on Mediterranean Transit Migration (MTM)

In the mid-2000s, along with Southeast Europe, the Mediterranean was seen by European governments as a 'problem' region. After 2005, it then moved into the spotlight from a border policy perspective, too. Even today, thousands of people

attempting to reach Europe by boat drown in the Mediterranean every year (see Widgren 2002: 156). In the 1998 Austrian strategy paper, the southern and eastern Mediterranean neighbours were described as part of the third 'concentric ring' that was to be tied to the EU through close economic cooperation and Association Agreements. In this way, it would function as an outer ring preventing 'uncontrolled and irregular' migration (see European Council 1998; Müller 2000). The Dialogue on Mediterranean Transit Migration (MTM), which still exists, was drawn up by the ICMPD in 2002/2003 as part of a European Commission-funded project that sought to create a forum akin to the Budapest Process for the Mediterranean region.

The aim was first and foremost to facilitate operational collaboration on border controls and information exchange with a view to combatting irregular migration. Second, the MTM was set up to foster medium and long-term cooperation in the field of migration, centring in particular on return, deportation, visas, human trafficking and development policy. The MTM was seen as an informal and flexible instrument to support existing cooperation forums, especially the European Mediterranean Partnership (Barcelona Process). At the start of the Process, both non-EU states Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey and the (current) EU members Spain, France, Italy, Greece, Malta and Cyprus participated, along with Switzerland and Norway (making Israel and the Balkan States the only Mediterranean countries that were not involved). As well as civil servants and representatives of the interior and foreign ministries in the participating states, there were also representatives from the intelligence services and development agencies. The Arab League, UNHCR and the European Commission sent observers; Interpol reiterated its support for the initiative on several occasions (ICMPD 2004p: 8–9; ICMPD 2004q).

In the early stages, the MTM dialogue focused on two areas: first, a rapid improvement on the operational side of 'the fight against irregular migration' and second, long-term collaboration to alleviate the causes of illegalised migration by means of development cooperation. Between 2003 and 2006, there were eight conferences and meetings whose final documents were published by the ICMPD in its capacity as the MTM secretariat (MTM 2003a, 2003b). As explained by the ICMPD, the MTM, having successfully established itself, transitioned from the exploratory phase (2002/2003) to the consolidation phase (2004/2005) before moving on to the project phase (2006/2007) (ICMPD 2007d). The MTM dialogue and the ICMPD in its role as secretariat both played an instrumental role in the geographical shift of European

migration and border policy from Eastern Europe to the Mediterranean region in the mid-2000s.

Globalisation of the Migration Regime

In the mid-2000s, another migration policy approach gained traction, with the ICMPD playing a significant role. Since as early as the 1990s, initiatives had been proposed that sought to establish international migration policy cooperation not just on a regional, but also on a global level. The first attempts to get this project off the ground were seen at the UN World Population Conference in Cairo in 1994. Although ultimately unsuccessful, with the conference failing to yield tangible results in this area, these early initiatives served as the initial impulse and reference for the global approach (see Georgi 2019: 213–215). In June 2001, the Swiss government hosted an international symposium entitled the Berne Initiative, which was described as 'an alternative [to the Cairo Conference], but still a very important project in its own right' (Interview Widgren 2004). The goal was to initiate global intergovernmental dialogue aimed at creating a common framework of principles and building consensus on fundamental migration policy issues. For the first few years of this process, the ICMPD served as the secretariat, a function which was, however, 'soon assumed by the IOM' (ibid.), as the role required an organisation with global contacts. Nevertheless, the ICMPD continued to be represented on the Berne Initiative Steering Group and, with Switzerland as its 'main member state', also maintained informal contacts within the initiative (ibid.; see Hofmann et al. 2004: 112–113; Drehscheibe 2003).

Another notable initiative at the time was the Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM). Established by then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in 2003, the GCIM sought to build on the outcomes of the Berne Initiative and regional processes, aiming to identify shortcomings in migration policies pursued by individual states and other actors and to provide recommendations for enhancing the global governance of international migration. In order to ensure independence, the commission was set up outside the UN framework. It comprised 15 experts, selected on the basis of regional and professional criteria, who presented their final report in mid-2005. In January 2004, Widgren participated as an expert in an official hearing conducted by the commission. Beyond this, there was also close informal cooperation between the GCIM and ICMPD, given that Switzerland and Sweden were key members of the ICMPD and the main organisers of the GCIM, and one of the co-chairs was a former

Swedish secretary of state and 'old friend' (Interview Widgren 2004) of Widgren's (see Hofmann et al. 2004: 113–114).

In the context of the Berne Initiative and the GCIM, a whole series of global migration policy forums were established, including, in 2003, the intergovernmental High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development within the UN system and the Global Migration Group, a forum for migration policy coordination set up in 2006, initially comprising ten international organisations (including the World Bank, UNDP, UNHCR and IOM). Although, in the mid-2000s attempts to embed global 'migration management' within the existing institutional framework were still in their infancy, global cooperation on migration issues had already reached a new level (IOM 2007a, 2007b; Interview Widgren 2004; Georgi 2019: 296ff.).

6. Analysis and Conclusions

> *"If people were ever to get the impression that we were, let's say, a zero immigration or deportation organisation, in other words an organisation that kicks people out of the country, one that actually pursues a closed-door policy ... first of all, this wouldn't be true. But then we would have to ask ourselves: "How did we manage to convey such an impression?"*
>
> *Gottfried Zürcher in 2004, then Deputy Director of the ICMPD*[29]

The sections above have outlined the context in which the ICMPD was established and traced its development from 1993 to 2004, primarily at an empirical level. In this concluding chapter, I will analyse the first decade of the ICMPD's existence at a higher level of abstraction. My aim here is to extract insights from the multitude of projects and details, condensing them with a view to identifying the central patterns in the ICMPD's work and its policies. In addition, I will provide an assessment of the organisation's role and importance in the European migration regime. Lastly, I will present a series of theoretical concepts intended to capture the ICMPD's political rationality, in other words the logic of action through which the organisation consolidates its aims and situation analyses into concrete strategies.

Guiding Principles

A good starting point for outlining the main patterns and characteristics of the ICMPD during its first decade is to reflect on what the ICMPD is not, or what it does not aim to be, in other words how it distinguishes itself rhetorically from other international organisations such as the IOM or the UNHCR. It is not relevant here whether the descriptions of other organisations articulated by ICMPD representatives are accurate. Rather, the focus is on the image of the organisation that emerges in such distinctions.

In an interview conducted in 2004, the ICMPD's then Deputy Director Gottfried Zürcher emphasised that the organisation had a different understanding of migration management than the IOM. While the IOM took a 'top-down approach', positioning itself as an actor that 'serves to efficiently and effectively steer migration flows from above' (Interview Zürcher 2004), the ICMPD took a different perspective, believing that states had limited capacity to control migration and that this control capacity had, in

[29] Interview Zürcher 2004.

fact, declined over time. The ICMPD, accordning to Zürcher, recognised the dilemmas and contradictions inherent in migration and sought to help states address these issues (ibid.). For instance, it acknowledged the contradictions involved in determining whether an asylum seeker is being persecuted or not (ibid.). Another key distinction, as pointed out by Jonas Widgren, is that the IOM was a US-dominated organisation (Interview Widgren 2004).

The distinction between the ICMPD and the UNHCR partly stemmed from the organisations' respective histories. The Intergovernmental Consultations (IGC), an indirect precursor to the ICMPD, was established in the mid-1980s in response to dissatisfaction among the UNHCR's donor countries (Interview Zürcher 2004; Interview Widgren 2004). An important point of contention between the ICMPD and the UNHCR, as described by the ICMPD representatives I interviewed, was the issue of forced deportation – a matter on which the two organisations positioned themselves at 'opposite poles' (Interview Gehrke/Pluim 2004). While the UNHCR, according to ICMPD staff, rejected compulsory measures, the ICMPD emphasised from the very start that, as long as the asylum system had 'shortcomings', such measures would be inevitable. The UNHCR's position, which also stems from its mandate to protect refugees, had, according to an ICMPD representative interviewed in 2004, changed over time and by the mid-2000s, cooperation with the organisation was described as 'positive' and 'highly satisfactory' (ibid.).

A fundamental element of the ICMPD was the organisation's self-image as a service provider for European states. The importance of this role was repeatedly emphasised in the interviews I conducted and in the organisation's own publications. The ICMPD stressed that it did not have a mandate to pursue its own independent objectives but was solely focussed on supporting its member states 'in fulfilling their duties' (Interview Zürcher 2004). The ICMPD did not regard national sovereignty as an end in itself or absolute goal, instead advocating for European communitarisation across all areas of migration policy. Former Director General Widgren highlighted the ICMPD's 'European philosophy', stating: 'Ideologically, we are European fundamentalists' (Interview Widgren 2004). It was crucial to the ICMPD to be perceived as 'a European, not an American, but a European organisation' (Interview Zürcher 2004).

The ICMPD's mode of operation was largely informal, a characteristic which the organisation and its representatives portrayed as a strength and advantage. This informal approach meant, for instance, that negotiations within the Budapest Process

or the MTM could be conducted more 'quickly' and with 'greater flexibility' than within the UN system. Such informal processes, which included intergovernmental consultations within the ICMPD bodies themselves, laid the groundwork for formal decisions. This informal approach was, however – at least according to how the organisation saw itself – not an attempt to covertly exert influence, as seen with lobbying groups. Instead, the organisation's representatives claimed that its focus was purely on providing informal support to governments in their decision-making, helping them to comply with immigration guidelines. As a result, the ICMPD conducted its work in the background, which is one of the reasons why it has remained relatively unknown until today. 'To some extent', this was a 'conscious choice' (Interview Gehrke/Pluim 2004). The ICMPD did not attach much importance to public relations; it was not really 'seeking the limelight' (ibid.), as this just made its work 'more difficult' (ibid.).

Policies

Discussing the ICMPD's policies is not as straightforward as it may initially appear. In the organisation's self-descriptions and the interviews I conducted, my interviewees reiterated that the ICMPD was a 'service provider' for states:

"I think it's absolutely ridiculous when international organisations come and say: "We'll tell you what to do! We'll tell you how to be happy!" I find this kind of top-down approach completely unacceptable for an international organisation. What we do and what we try to implement, with the help of our staff, on a daily basis is to operate as a service organisation. It's not our job to talk governments into setting specific political goals or telling them what decisions to make. Instead we support governments in this process."

(Interview Zürcher 2004)

On a formal level, therefore, the ICMPD lacks an official position of its own. Although the ICMPD does not want to convey an independent stance in its work, it does still have its own agenda, which it implements indirectly. It goes without saying that an institution whose core responsibilities include policy advice, policy development and content preparation for intergovernmental negotiations cannot work without performing its own situation analyses, developing its own clear positions and crafting a feasible and meaningful strategy. The political approach prevalent at the ICMPD until the mid-2000s was most clearly reflected in the speeches of Jonas Widgren. Although

Widgren once stated in a speech he gave in October 1998, 'I am speaking here from a personal perspective and do not represent a formal ICMPD position' (Widgren 1998b: 1), he was, nevertheless, conveying the ICMPD's informal position – something which undeniably exists and is integrated into the organisation's work. It is both possible and indeed necessary to discuss and elaborate on the ICMPD's policies. Since Widgren, in his capacity as founder and director of the organisation, held a key position within the ICMPD, the de facto informal position of the organisation in the mid-2000s can be reconstructed through his speeches and publications.

Migration Control and Combatting 'Irregular' Migration

In its first decade, the ICMPD maintained a fundamentally positive approach to migration: 'The ultimate, long-term objective is of course freedom of movement' (Interview Widgren 2004). However, to allow free movement, strict migration controls were needed. In 2003, Widgren succinctly summarised this reasoning as follows:

"A policy for increased and planned immigration presupposes a rethinking on asylum. What hinders a debate on increased immigration is the incapability of European enlightened constituencies to think broadly on protection of refugees. [...] All common systems for orderly and increased immigration to Europe presupposes a refined legislation on whom to let in and whom to let out"

(Widgren 2003: 1–2).

For the ICMPD, this 'enlightened policy' encompassed all measures designed to monitor, review and prevent unwanted migration, with a particular focus on 'irregular' migration, the organisation's most important area of responsibility. The prevailing view was that, if this type of migration could not be prevented, the organisation and its members might as well be 'digging the Geneva Convention's grave because this would be the end of it' (Interview Zürcher 2004). The overriding goal is to preserve public support for refugee protection. If no distinction is made 'between a Geneva Convention refugee, who is actually granted status, and someone who has not received this status' (Interview Gehrke/Pluim 2004), and both of these individuals are allowed to stay in the country, acceptance of refugee protection will erode.

From the ICMPD's point of view, migration control comprises several different elements. These include 'Integrated Border Management', which involves not only the

reinforcing borders but also coordination and cooperation – both nationally and internationally – among all relevant actors and institutions across the various levels of border management. In its first ten years, the ICMPD was involved in a range of initiatives aimed at strengthening border regimes in Central and (South)-East Europe. This included participation in the Budapest Process, the provision of training for the new Schengen member states, and the implementation of projects in Bosnia, Croatia, Macedonia and Albania. A second strand of the ICMPD's migration control strategy aimed at combatting 'human trafficking' and 'people smuggling'. Although the ICMPD distinguishes between these two phenomena, they were almost always discussed in tandem, with little effort made to draw a substantive distinction between 'trafficking', a crime akin to the slave trade, and 'people smuggling', understood as the facilitation, for financial gain, of refugees' and asylum seekers' irregular entry into a state. In the late 1990s, the ICMPD published a key study on the link between organised crime and 'illegal' migration (ICMPD 1999) and, in 2000, contributed to the debate on the Anti-Trafficking Protocol at the UN conference on fighting organised crime in Palermo (see ICMPD n.d). Development policy was also regarded by the ICMPD as an instrument of migration policy, based on the rhetorically reinforced assertion that improving conditions in countries of origin could reduce migration – an assertion that has remained remarkably persistent in migration debates to this day.

A central component of the ICMPD's strategy to tackle 'irregular' migration – and a key element of its overall approach – was a 'rigorous return policy' (see Widgren 1999b). This included both 'voluntary return' and forced deportation. However, the ICMPD made clear that one could not function effectively without the other: 'If there's no stick, the carrot won't do any good [...]. As long as there is an alternative to returning home, i.e. remaining in the host country, even illegally, refugee return strategies are essentially ineffective, and that includes voluntary return programmes' (Interview Gehrke/Pluim 2004). The following statement by the later Director General of the ICMPD Zürcher underlines the importance of deportations for the ICMPD:

"If it is said of the ICMPD that we are not humanitarian enough because we clearly state that return is necessary, then my response is: "Yes, that is indeed the case". In other words, that is entirely acceptable to me. I am ok with this. Of course return and repatriation are necessary. Compulsory measures are, too – as is border management. And I believe this will remain necessary in the future, which is why we need to make these measures more efficient and more effective. That's something we acknowledge too."

(Interview Zürcher 2004)

In order to make 'return and repatriation more effective', migration policy has to become an integral part of foreign policy – primarily with the aim of concluding readmission agreements with transit countries and countries of origin. This expansion of foreign policy, first called for in the aforementioned Austrian strategy paper of 1991, was also endorsed by the ICMPD. In fact, the majority of the organisation's activities were geared towards this aspect, including numerous research initiatives, the entire Source Country Information Systems (SCIS) project and the activities implemented as part of the Budapest Process, the aim of which was to lay the groundwork for readmission agreements with transit countries and countries of origin. Another aspect of migration control was the nexus between migration and security, an issue the ICMPD openly addressed, describing it as the 'dirty interface' (Interview Zürcher 2004). Among the initiatives that saw the ICMPD link policing and intelligence-based security policies and practices to issues pertaining to refugees and migrants are the aforementioned SCIS discussion paper (ICMPD/SCIS 2003c) and a dedicated conference held as part of the Budapest Process on the role of migration control in the fight against terrorism (Budapest Group 2002).

Right to Asylum and Protection of Refugees

'Irregular' migration must be combatted in order to enable and preserve 'regular' migration. This refers first and foremost to the principle that 'genuinely persecuted people must be able to access protection – this is, after all, why the Geneva Convention exists' (Interview Zürcher 2004). For the first 15 years of the ICMPD's operations, the organisation did not call the right to asylum into question. On the contrary, the ICMPD consistently maintained that combatting 'irregular' migration was crucial in order to safeguard the right to asylum. Notably, Widgren opposed the proposal contained in the Austrian strategy paper to abolish the individual right to asylum.

Yet, the ICMPD's actual position, as reflected in its projects and documents, paints a more complex picture. Widgren repeatedly voiced his support for the establishment of 'regional alternatives for refugees', intended to accommodate those seeking protection in proximity to crisis regions while their asylum applications are processed (Widgren 2003: 1–2). The primary objective of such camps was to reduce the number of refugees reaching Europe. In a similar vein, the reinforcement of European borders through initiatives such as Integrated Border Management made it almost impossible for those seeking protection to legally apply for asylm. The system of 'safe countries',

of origin' and 'carrier sanctions' which Widgren helped develop during his time with the IGC, was founded on a very restrictive interpretation of the concept of refugee. The emphasis on 'rigorous' deportation of 'irregular' migrants thus primarily targeted asylum seekers whose applications fell outside these provisions and their strict interpretation. Besides the countless studies and conference reports on asylum and migration, the SCIS was the ICMPD's key instrument for supporting European asylum policy.

Although ICMPD staff acknowledge the contradiction between the goal of protecting refugees and a restrictive migration policy, emphasising that they 'must of course always seek the best way of dealing with the situation' (Interview Zürcher 2004), the organisation's focus remains firmly on the restrictive approach. Once again, this highlights the contrast with the UNHCR – the 'opposite pole' to the ICMPD.

Migration Management and Immigration Policy

When it comes to migration policy, what set the ICMPD apart from the majority of other actors in the 1990s and early 2000s was the organisation's call for a drastic increase in immigration. In a speech given in 2000, for example, Widgren argued: 'Of course we have in Europe to raise the present intake level from one to some five million a year. Our inward-biased attitude to all this is detrimental to all concerned' (Widgren 2000: 143). Widgren then went on to explain that because of the high unemployment and low female employment rates at the time, as well as the EU's eastern enlargement and the third-country nationals from Algeria and Turkey living in Europe, such an increase was not feasible at that point in time (2000). In his speech, Widgren went on to state: 'But then, in 2006–2010, dear EU leaders, following an in-depth democratic debate in the five-doubling of immigration levels in our own interest, do really raise the levels, on the basis of a North-American-like slot system' (Widgren 2000: 143). The proposed increase in immigration to Europe was to be aligned with its demographic and economic needs and managed flexibly. Both the level of immigration and the selection of migrants was to be driven by labour market demand: 'There must be economic criteria' (Interview Widgren 2004). However, much like asylum migration, the fundamental prerequisite for increased legal immigration is the successful fight against 'irregular' migration. Without effective and restrictive control of migration movements, increased legal immigration would not be accepted

by society and thus would not be politically feasible. This approach can be expressed using the concept of 'regulated openness' (Ghosh 2000: 25).

A Modern Integration Policy

The way in which Widgren played with high numbers of necessary immigrant per year, has been discussed elsewhere (Widgren 2001b: 10–11), and it shows that he did not consider reasoning based on ethnic or national homogeneity to be particularly significant. Instead, he linked calls for increased immigration with an integration concept which, when compared to the conservative notions of assimilation which prevailed in the 1990s and 2000s, can be considered quite 'modern' and liberal (see Widgren 1990: 765). In the mid-1970s, Widgren had been involved in the development of a new integration policy for Sweden that combined legal and social equality with cultural freedom of choice (Hammar 2004: 17). Later, however, Widgren came to view this policy as a failure: 'Let's be plain. Integration takes place on and via the labour market. It is at this defining place that the success and failure of "integration" in modern societies can most clearly be seen' (Widgren 2004). The ICMPD's approach to integration was 'modern' in the sense that it moved beyond conservative notions of ethno-national homogeneity, instead emphasising the importance of the labour market and language proficiency for 'successful' integration. While integration policy was not a key focus for the ICMPD, the organisation was more concerned with 'managing migration than with working directly with migrants' (Interview Widgren 2004). Nevertheless, the ICMPD carried out multiple individual projects in this area, such as the Austrian Migration and Integration Report and the ÖFM's integration portal.

A Multilateral European and Global Migration Regime

Increasing immigration based on demographic and economic considerations was not the ICMPD's sole objective. Under Widgren's leadership, the organisation sought to establish a comprehensive regime for 'ordered' migration where all aspects of migration policy – from border management to asylum, labour migration to returns and repatriation policy – would be integrated into a coherent framework. Creating a regime like this was one of Widgren's most significant political projects. It was no coincidence that the commemorative publication issued by the ICMPD employees to mark Widgren's 60th birthday was titled Towards a Multilateral Migration Regime (ICMPD 2004d).

By Widgren's own admission, however, it would take decades for immigration management to be coordinated at the European level and for such a multilateral regime to be established (see Interview Widgren 2004). This, Widgren believed, was all the more true for a global migration regime such as his proposed World Architecture on the Movements of People (WAMP) (Widgren 2000: 143). The European and ultimately global regime was a crucial component of the ICMPD's migration management concept. According to Widgren, while the individual measures and instruments, from migration control to asylum to immigration policy, were already in place, what set the ICMPD's approach apart was its effort to combine these elements in one comprehensive regime where the individual components were coordinated and integrated, with 'everything connected and interrelated' (Interview Widgren 2004). In this sense, the ICMPD's migration management can be described as a technocratic vision.

The Importance of The ICMPD

Based on the description cited at the beginning of this study, which assigns the ICMPD a 'key role in determining, evaluating and dismantling international refugee flows and refugee routes' (Plattform für eine Welt ohne Rassismus 2001), we can deduce the importance (or lack thereof) of the organisation from its establishment until the mid-2000s. That said, on the whole, the aforementioned assessment is not particularly accurate. The ICMPD was a relatively small organisation with only a few employees outside of Vienna. It had neither been actively involved in determining and evaluating refugee routes, nor had it played more than a peripheral role in their dismantling. The organisation certainly cannot be credited with an instrumental role in these aspects of migration control in that period. In fact, rather than being rooted in investigative research and operational dismantling, the importance of the ICMPD lay in the political influence it wielded through providing informal policy advice on all facets of migration management and in the coordination of intergovernmental cooperation in the fight against illegal migration.

In taking this approach, however, the ICMPD 'probably exerted significant influence' (Interview Widgren 2004) on the substantive development of European migration policy until the mid-2000s through its wide range of services, research and projects. The informal nature of its influence explains why the ICMPD has remained virtually unknown to this day.

In addition to its involvement in policy development until the mid-2000s, the ICMPD's most important functions included coordinating the expansion of the EU-dominated border regime into Central, Eastern and Southeast Europe through the Budapest Process, provi6ding services to its Eastern European member states, implementing training projects for border guards, and assessing progress in countries such as Bosnia, Croatia and Albania. In light of all this, Dietrich and Glöde quite aptly describe the ICMPD as a 'Coordination Unit for Border Reinforcement in Central, Eastern and Southeast Europe' (Dietrich/Glöde 1999: 22). From the description above, we can glean that, while the ICMPD was a key player in in European migration policy from the mid-1990s until the mid-2000s, and crucial in some areas, it was not the central actor in this field. In the past ten years, however, this has somewhat changed. As mentioned above, since the mid-2010s, the ICMPD has taken an increasingly crucial role in equipping the border guards, customs, and police authorities in the Mediterranean region. It sends non-lethal materials, builds police training centres, and transfers ships and vehicles to the security forces of authoritarian states (see Naceur 2021: 33ff.)

Political Rationality

What political rationality underlies the ICMPD's work? Drawing on the works of Michel Foucault and governmentality studies, political rationality is the guiding principle behind a specific practice. It involves an actor analysing and reflecting on their objectives and the various factors influencing the respective situation which have to be taken into account to achieve these objectives. Essentially, it is about an individual actor 'rationalising' their own objectives, conditions of action, external influences and anticipated resistance in order to formulate a maxim of action. These maxims shape both the general strategies and the different tactics. Political rationality thus 'shapes governance techniques', serving as a cornerstone that involves both reflection and calculation. It lies between different forms of influence and resistance, on the one hand, and the use of governance techniques, on the other.

In my interpretation, the ICMPD's political rationality during its first ten years can be characterised by four maxims of action. I will outline these through the following four concepts: strategic nationalism, stability of valorisation, economic utilitarianism and a rationality of control. In the original German edition of this study, I developed these concepts based on a detailed theoretical interpretation of the ICMPD (see Georgi 2007: 62ff.). However, since the focus of this publication is empirical findings on the ICMPD,

I will now present the concepts in a more concise, condensed form. Although the terms refer to the early history of the ICMPD, it is my hope that they will also provide valuable insights for the analysis and critique of the organisation's current practices, as well as those of similar or comparable border regime actors.

Strategic Nationalism

The concept of strategic nationalism reflects the observation that the ICMPD incorporated into its policies and practices elements that are essential to the preservation of nation-state power. For the donor governments and member states of the ICMPD, these elements were essentially state sovereignty and a certain degree of national homogeneity. The ICMPD felt compelled to adopt these principles – principles that had been prioritised by its member governments – as its own goals. This was because, owing to its status as an international organisation and its mandate as a service organisation, it had a duty to take the interests of its member states into account. The main interest of these nation-states was to preserve the basis of their power – their sovereignty. Expressed through the demands of relevant groups in society and the perceived need for cultural cohesion to ensure the survival of the nation-state, maintaining national homogeneity was also in the interests of the ICMPD member countries. The use of the adjective strategic here aims to highlight that national sovereignty and homogeneity were not among the primary objectives of the ICMPD itself, but were nonetheless integral to its approach because of the influence exerted by its member governments. Strategic nationalism thus became a defining feature of the ICMPD's approach, manifesting through the recommendation, promotion and implementation of governance techniques deemed to support the preservation of national sovereignty and homogeneity. These techniques can be consolidated under the broader strategy of strict migration control. The various individual tactics employed – tamper-proof passport documents, provision of technical equipment for border guards, the establishment of the SCIS information repository, and the implementation of readmission agreements with countries of origin – were all designed to enforce the strategy of strict migration control, which, in turn, was rooted in strategic nationalism.

Stability of Valorisation

The second element of the ICMPD's political rationality up until the mid-2000s is encapsulated in the term stability of valorisation. This concept describes the notion that uncontrolled, 'irregular' migration can – both directly and indirectly – destabilise the process of successful valorisation of capital. Indirectly, uncontrolled migration in the context of nation-state governance and capitalist socialisation of labour has the potential to generate social crises and conflicts. Directly, it affects capital accumulation in the capitalist world economy, which is inherently structured around national units. The valorisation of capital relies on the division of the world into nation-states, as this division creates a contrast between the centre and the periphery, shaping varying conditions of accumulation and exploitation.

Another crucial aspect is that within national welfare states, the processes of inclusion and exclusion as well as the hierarchisation of the population based on nationality and citizenship serve to produce and reproduce the hegemony of ruling class factions. Uncontrolled, autonomous migration bypasses the mechanisms of exclusion, making it difficult to establish a stable hierarchy among migrant and host-country population groups. This is why stable valorisation of capital requires the elimination of autonomous migration.

This idea lies at the very core of the ICMPD's political rationality. The fundamental strategic model of the organisation, and indeed that of its founder Jonas Widgren, can be described as a neoliberal global governance policy. This model is based on the assumption that global problems, such as poverty, unemployment, destruction of the environment – and indeed even 'uncontrolled migration' – can only be addressed through global cooperation within an international regime and a neoliberal model of accumulation that fosters stable economic growth. To put it in simpler terms: 'Without growth and close international cooperation, the most pressing social problems cannot be solved'. Since the ICMPD was heavily dependent on stable capitalist growth to achieve its goals within the aforementioned model, it believed any disruption of successful valorisation of capital had to be prevented. From the ICMPD's perspective, uncontrolled, 'irregular' migration represented a threat to this very stability. This view is rationalised in the strategy of strict migration controls.

It thus becomes evident that the ICMPD's strategy of strict migration control was grounded in two distinct rationalities. The first was strategic nation which immigration

centred on the organisation's aim to preserve state sovereignty and national homogeneity. The second was the rationality of stable valorisation. In order to achieve this, the ICMPD believed that preventing the disruption of successful capital accumulation caused by autonomous migration was essential.

Economic Utilitarianism

The term economic utilitarianism describes the third component of the ICMPD's political rationality. Economic utilitarianism is based on the same principles as the stability of valorisation rationality: capitalist growth as the foundation of the ICMPD's social and development model. Furthermore, economic growth, at least according to the hegemonic assumption, aligns with the interests of European states and their populations, a consideration which the ICMPD has to factor into its approach. Economic utilitarianism recognises that for maximum growth, it is not enough to merely stabilise the conditions of valorisation – in fact, growth needs these conditions to be improved. In light of the circumstances at the time, the ICMPD concluded that the European states would benefit from an increase in immigration to improve the conditions of capital valorisation and generate sustained, high growth. This calculation of maximising the economic utility of immigration for European states led to the strategy of migration management where immigration would be flexibly adapted to meet the changing needs of European states. According to this approach, immigrants are 'selected' for admission based on their economic value.

Building on the rationality of economic utilitarianism, a second strategy emerges: 'functional' integration policy. Large-scale immigration for economic reasons requires migrants to be 'integrated' in the host society. In this context, integration implies ensuring sufficient mutual acceptance to prevent the destabilisation of capital valorisation through social conflict. Furthermore, it aims to create a climate where racist or xenophobic sentiments do not make it impossible to find enough 'qualified' migrants. Building on this essentially economic rationale, an integration policy is needed that goes beyond ethno-nationalist paradigms and simplistic demands for immigrants to assimilate.

Economic utilitarianism can shape migration policy in different ways. When the dominant forces view immigration as beneficial for the economy, this rationality often leads to an increase in immigration designed to maximise utility.Conversely, when

immigration is seen. Conversely, when immigration is seen in a largely negative light and deemed less essential, the same rationality leads to strict limitations on immigration. For the strategy of migration management to work effectively, economic utilitarianism needs effective migration control. If a state is unable to prevent 'irregular' migration, flexible migration management is impossible. Nevertheless, there is an inherent tension and potential contradiction between the rationalities of economic utilitarianism and strategic nationalism. Both result in the development of governance techniques that aim to control migration. However, the question of when and for what groups migration should be limited – and indeed when a more open-door approach is advocated – is contentious and the result of negotiations and ongoing conflicts and struggles over policy direction.

Rationality of Control

All three of the maxims outlined above – strategic nationalism, stability of valorisation and economic utilitarianism – point to a strategy aimed at strengthening states' ability to control migration and mobility, though for different reasons. Strategic nationalism requires this ability in order to safeguard state sovereignty and national homogeneity. Stability of valorisation relies on it to maintain conditions conducive to successful capital accumulation. Economic utilitarianism, for its part, needs it to flexibly manage immigration, adjusting numbers and filtering migrants based on economic needs. The practical implementation of migration control and management is contradictory and contested, yet all three maxims of action recognise it as a strategic necessity. The political rationality underpinning the ICMPD, therefore, revolves around a rationality of control. Irrespective of which of the maxims takes precedence in a given context, states and governments need to maximise their ability to effectively control the movement of people, in other words to monitor, steer and structure it in line with their own interests. This goes beyond traditional border control; it also involves 'maintaining control' over the composition and movement of populations. The ICMPD aims to support its member states in developing this very 'core competency' or 'capability'.

The growing recognition during the 1990s and 2000s that states' actual capacity to regulate the composition and movement of populations is inherently limited did not lead to a retreat from the strategy of control, but instead, I believe, to its radicalisation. The political rationality of control arising from the three maxims of action outlined

above acquires an autonomy, a logic of its own. The de facto ability to control becomes an end in itself. In this sense, the rationality of control is essentially the rationality of migration management. In many cases, management and control are used interchangeably in relation to migration, with both terms aiming for generally unconditional, unrestricted access, the political implications of which remain undefined. In this sense, the rationality of migration control is a fundamentally empty logic.

All this recontextualises the many individual projects and activities conducted by the ICMPD during its early phase. The organisation's fundamental guiding principles of strict migration control, flexible migration management and 'modern' integration policy can no longer be viewed merely as strategies emerging from the different elements of the political rationality of migration management. These principles were also governance techniques which, in keeping with the political rationality of control, were designed to allow extensive access to the population and control over its composition. Their aim was to control and, through various means, 'improve' the movement and thus the composition of populations. Regardless of whether such an 'improvement' follows the logic of national homogeneity or is aimed at maximising human capital in line with economic utilitarianism, migration management as understood by the ICMPD is a project focused on the 'quality' of the population.

In the context of the political rationality of control and the broader framework of neoliberal world governance, migration management contains an element of instrumental logic, alongside a corresponding technocratic approach to population policy. It can be inferred that there is a connection between the political rationality of migration management, in the sense of a population-oriented rationality of control, and earlier forms of population policy. This, however, remains a topic for further investigation (see Aly/Heim 1993; Düvell 2002: 156–157).

In order not to repeat the ICMPD's mistake of prioritising 'migration management over the migrants themselves' (Interview Widgren 2004), it is vital that we bring the interests, hopes and aspirations of refugees and migrants back into the equation. Their interests are, so to speak, 'negatively' incorporated into the political rationality of migration management, where they are regarded in the ICMPD's practices and policies as a form of resistance to be overcome.

The ICMPD does not consider the actions of migrants who, uninvited and without permission, move from the periphery to the wealthy states of the centre in search of a better, maybe even 'good life' for their families, as legitimate. In line with the principles of every individual's attachment to 'their country', the 'right to national self-determination' and the 'sovereignty of nation-states', the aspirations of these individuals are not factored into the political rationality of migration management. What is part of the equation, however – and this is something that in fact causes significant unrest – is that these people do not concern themselves with legitimacy. Instead, they assert their right to a better life by circumventing the rules, laws and controls, and, to some extent, enforce this right through the relative autonomy of migration. This autonomy becomes integral to the political rationality of migration management because it undermines the ability of the other elements to achieve their goals. In this context, strategic nationalism, stability and economic utilitarianism are partly negated by the oppositional force of the autonomy of migration.

Epilogue: Militarizing Borders, Commodifying Mobility

"I want to give the organization more political weight and visibility."
Michael Spindelegger (2015)

By Sofian Philip Naceur

This year will mark the end of an era in the history of the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD). After two consecutive terms, ICMPD Director General Michael Spindelegger will retire from the organisation at the end of 2025. Since 2016, the former Vice-Chancellor of Austria and an influential figure of the country's centre-right establishment has contributed significantly to expanding the ICMPD's footprint in European migration policy, both in terms of mainstreaming some of the key concepts it advocates for, as well as the acceleration of its on-the-ground impact and presence across Europe, Africa, and Asia. Susanne Raab, his successor at the border regime service provider's helm, was elected by ICMPD's Steering Group in June 2025 and is to officially take over as the new Director General in January 2026. She promises operational and political continuity. Like Spindelegger, Raab was a leading member of the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) for years before joining the ICMPD and held ministerial positions in the Austrian government as Minister for Women and Integration in 2020/2021 and as Minister for Women, Family, Integration and Media between 2021 and 2025 (ICMPD 2025a).

If Raab is to maintain the operational and political orientation of the ICMPD's last decade, the organisation's transition from a nearly seamless and peripheral service provider to an influential actor in the European border regime industry will continue. After predominantly offering consultancy services and facilitation for informal governmental exchange for more than 20 years, Spindelegger helped the organisation to widen its scope of activities by directly involving it in militarising borders, a course likely to be maintained under Raab. Given the expected further growth of the ICMPD's impact on European, African and Asian border regimes, it is even more important to better comprehend what the organisation stands for, to which extent it has sustained the spirit of its early years, but also in which geopolitical and economic context it was established.

Fabian Georgi's in-depth research on the ICMPD and the empirical data he was able to collect in the early 2000s in particular offer a unique insight into the organisation's

ideological foundation, the motivations of the governments of Switzerland and Austria in establishing it in the first place, and, crucially, its conception of migration as a 'phenomenon' to be 'managed', filtered, and harnessed to ensure the stability of European economies and labour markets. Georgi's research on the ICMPD contains data that is partly non-accessible today, revealing interview extracts as well as an early analysis of the centre's overall self-perception and the reasoning behind its consistent campaigning for what is largely known today as 'border management'. As this academic source has been so far only available in German, this brochure now provides for an edited and shortened version of the original text in English to facilitate access to this valuable data for a larger audience.

This publication's concluding chapter now aims to further substantiate the claim Georgi makes in the preface, suggesting that the ICMPD has indeed maintained its basic convictions regarding migration and overall approach towards 'migration management'. Since the early 1990s, the organisation pursued and continues to pursue a distinct double-track strategy, mirrored in almost every project past and present: rigorous 'combating' of irregular migration on the one hand, and the systematic attempt to filter immigration in a highly selective manner in line with economic and demographic needs on the other. Or, regarding the latter, in other words: "[The ICMPD] aims at increasing immigration [to western Europe] for economic and rational reasons, but always for the benefit of European states" (Georgi 2007: 98).

Before outlining some examples of the ways by which the ICMPD expanded its geographical outreach and widened the scope of its activities since the 2000s, the following section discusses the role of the outgoing Director General in this institutional evolution. This chapter shows how the ICMPD gradually shifted its operational footprint from a soft power approach towards a praxis that entails more and more elements of operational hard power. Of particular importance in this regard is its intermediate role in various procurement schemes for beneficiary states in the southern and eastern Mediterranean, western Africa, Central Asia, as well as the Indian subcontinent.

"Making the Most of the Crisis"

Michael Spindelegger can certainly be considered a staunch advocate of the externalisation of the EU's border regime. However, he cannot be blamed for not having announced this conviction in advance, at least in euphemistic terms. In an interview for the Austrian newspaper Die Presse shortly before he officially took office, the former vice-chancellor stated that he wanted to give the ICMPD "more political weight and visibility". He told the outlet that the organisation had excellent staff, but hardly anyone in the public was aware of its work. In the midst of the so-called 'European refugee crisis' in 2015, he promised to provide more support to the countries bordering the so-called 'Balkan route' and turn the ICMPD into a "political platform to which organisations such as the UNHCR or the IOM should also dock" (Ultsch 2015). In November 2016, he declared in his opening speech at the Vienna Migration Conference, an event organised annually by the ICMPD: "We need to think of a new international and European migration policy architecture, because the old one is not working anymore" (Spindelegger 2016). Ever since, he has advocated for tightening the international architecture regarding borders and migration, successfully using the 2015 'refugee crisis' to boost the ICMPD's footprint across the continent. "Spindelegger had the political will and the right connections to, as one former employee put it, "make the most of the crisis"", reads a 2023 investigation about the ICMPD (Campbell / D'Agostino 2023).

After ten years in office, Spindelegger's record is certainly impressive. In the past decade, the ICMPD has not only played an important role in integrating non-EU states on the Balkan route into the European border regime, but also states in the Mediterranean region such as Tunisia, Morocco and Lebanon, as well as states along the so-called 'New Silk Road' stretching from Eastern Europe via Central Asia to Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh. Additionally, the ICMPD has signed cooperation agreements with numerous governments, state agencies and supranational actors since 2016, from the African Union to the German development body Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). Since Spindelegger took office, the number of member states in the organisation has grown from 15 to 21 – Ireland being the last country to join in July 2024 (ICMPD 2024c). The ICMPD also grew substantially in terms of staff and budget. While the organisation only employed around 40 people in 2004 and had a budget of 3.5 million euro, including project funding (Georgi 2007: 7), the number of employees rose to 544 and the contracted project volume to a staggering 714 million euro by 2024. When Spindelegger took over the Directorship in

2015, the contracted project volume accounted for only 110.6 million euro, a figure that gradually rose until 2022 and skyrocketed the following year. The table below shows the figures provided by the organisation itself in its annual reports, published on its website since 2015 (ICMPD 2016; ICMPD 2017; ICMPD 2018; ICMPD 2019; ICMPD 2020; ICMPD 2022a; ICMPD 2023; ICMPD 2024a; ICMPD 2025b):

	Employees	Duty Stations	Consolidated Annual Budget	Contracted Project Volume[30]
2015	n/a	19	16.8 mm euro	110.6 mm euro
2016	197	18	24.3 mm euro	124/121 mm euro
2017	223	22	32.1 mm euro	138 mm euro
2018	257	16	38.4 mm euro	230 mm euro
2019	346	27	45.8 mm euro	241 mm euro
2021	463	29	58.2 mm euro	329 mm euro
2022	484	28	74.5 mm euro	371 mm euro
2023	498	33	79.0 mm euro	700 mm euro
2024	544	31	101.4 mm euro	714 mm euro

Under Spindelegger, the ICMPD has unambiguously maintained its founding spirit and overall strategy to regulate and control migration by offering a vast array of services in the framework of 'migration management', as exemplified by a 2020 interview with the Austrian Press Agency. In that interview, Spindelegger called on European governments to prepare for "a significant increase in migration after the coronavirus crisis." For him, the pandemic was an "opportunity" for European states "to better prepare themselves regarding migration". He insisted that EU governments should facilitate legal immigration in line with the needs of European companies and labour markets. It would be better to choose the migrants needed in those economies themselves, the press agency quotes him as saying. "Referring to corresponding projects in Spain and Morocco, Spindelegger argued in favour of training people

[30] The 'Consolidated Budget' refers to the ICMPD's budget, while the 'Contracted Project Volume' indicates the volume of resources, commissioned for the implementation of projects.

directly in countries of origin according to the specific needs of companies in destination countries", the report reads (Austrian Press Agency 2020).

Unlike the range of its activities, ICMPD's basic working methods and methodology have remained largely similar to those already applied in the 2000s and before. The organisation continues to rely on three pillars in its work: facilitation of informal dialogue between governments and relevant organisations, research and data collection, and the implementation of projects in migration and border management. The ICMPD also continues to pursue its activities by applying informal tactics and an apolitical, technical management jargon. Its self-perception as a service provider also remains relevant and is clearly visible in the organisation's official rhetoric. However, as Georgi already established in his work, the ICMPD maintains its own political rationality and acts according to its own distinct (regulatory) political goals and convictions. In the 1990s, the ICMPD's main distinction vis-à-vis other actors in Europe's evolving border regime industry was to call for a drastic increase in immigration and offer states services to that effect. Today, however, according to its official rhetoric, the ICMPD no longer advocates for a generalised drastic increase of immigration, but rather calls on states to turn towards the targeted recruitment of those needed in the labour markets of its member states and those states that contract the ICMPD for the implementation of projects. Or in the words of Sabine Hess, professor at the University of Göttingen in Germany, another academic who conducted extensive research on the ICMPD in the 2000s: "'Migration management' stands for a turning away from a zero-immigration policy towards a regulative approach of steering migration in a highly selective manner on a global scale" (Hess 2010: 97).

From Procurement Brokering to Labour Recruitment

Since Spindelegger took over as Director General, the ICMPD has increased its presence and impact in dozens of countries and has become an important, if not key player in the international and supranational border regime architecture and the 'border management' industry. The following five aspects are particularly relevant in this context:

- The ICMPD expanded geographically into the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean, but also into West Africa, Central Asia, and the Indian subcontinent;

- The organisation substantially increased its involvement in procurement projects to supply police, customs, and military authorities in those countries of transit and origin that are important for the EU or for other contracting partners;
- It also further enlarged the informal dialogue fora: today, the ICMPD runs the secretariats of the Budapest Process, the Prague Process, the Rabat Process, the Khartoum Process and the African Union-EU Continent-to-Continent Migration and Mobility Dialogue, and is involved in the informal migration dialogue between the EU and India, the India-EU Cooperation and Dialogue on Migration and Mobility;
- The ICMPD increased its efforts to mainstream projects aimed at recruiting skilled labour for various governments and governmental contractors, in particular in Europe;
- The Vienna Migration Conference has increasingly turned into an institution that, as of today, can be considered an integral part of the international conference and summit architecture.

Regarding its geographical expansion, the ICMPD accelerated its attempts to sign country cooperation agreements (CCA) and seat agreements (SA) with non-EU governments, and has concluded numerous corresponding deals in recent years with, for instance, Jordan (SA 2018), Libya (SA 2019), Nigeria (SA 2020), Pakistan (CCA 2020), Ghana (SA 2021), Azerbaijan (CCA 2006, SA 2021), Morocco (SA 2022), Turkey (SA 2022) and Niger (SA 2022). Its 2018 SA with Malta allowed the organisation to establish a regional office in the island state, providing for regional activities and projects across the Mediterranean, while its Abuja office in Nigeria covers regional activities in West Africa. In 2021, the ICMPD established a regional office in Istanbul, a key station for implementing a vast array of activities across parts of Asia. ICMPD's new focal points of interest are certainly Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent, but also North Africa. According to its website, as of September 2024, the ICMPD runs offices – which it calls 'duty stations' – in Accra, Abidjan, Praia, Abuja, and Addis Ababa on the African continent, Beirut, Amman, Erbil, and Baghdad in the 'Middle East', as well as Yerevan, Tbilisi, Baku, Ashgabat, Tashkent, Bishkek, Dushanbe, Islamabad, Dhaka, and New Delhi in Asia (see map below, ICMPD 2024b).

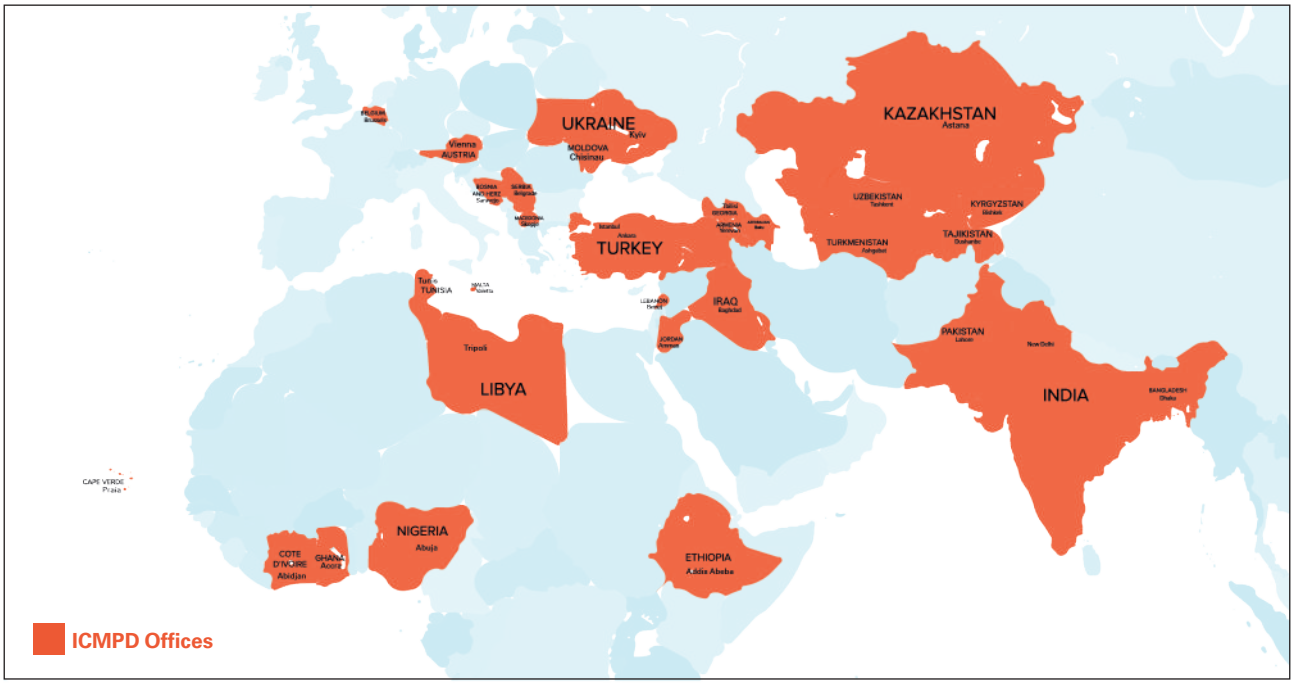
The ICMPD's most important evolution regarding its on-the-ground impact is its extensive involvement in sometimes vast procurement projects, aimed at equipping border security bodies in transit states or countries of origin with surveillance or policing equipment and the provision or coordination of corresponding training. In Lebanon, the ICMPD has worked for years on projects aimed at reinforcing 'security' at

Rafiq Hariri International Airport and expanding Lebanon's maritime interception capabilities (ICMPD 2022b). In Central Asia, it runs the Border Management in Central Asia (BOMCA) scheme that also provides for the provision of equipment and know-how for already existing training facilities and airports in the entire region (ICMPD 2021a). In Ghana, the ICMPD was involved in projects that facilitated the delivery of capacity building and equipment to tackle document fraud (ICMPD 2021b). In Pakistan, the ICMPD cooperated with the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) to accelerate controls at Pakistani airports and detect forged documents (ICMPD 2025c). A security department, the so-called 'Risk Analysis Unit', was set up to tighten controls of passengers at airports while 'second-line immigration officers' were deployed after passport control desks at airports in Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar, and Islamabad, "staffed by trained officials and equipped with advanced forensic tools to detect fraudulent travel documents". In 2024 alone, 315 FIA officials were trained within the scope of ICMPD-coordinated training schemes (ICMPD 2025c).

In Tunisia and Morocco, the ICMPD coordinated an EU-funded project worth 65 million euro to purchase a vast array of items for police and customs authorities of both countries (EUTF 2018). An additional project in Tunisia, funded by Germany, Austria, and Denmark with an initial 8.3 million euro facilitated the construction of two inter-agency police training centres, one in Nefta in Southern Tunisia and one in Oued Zarga in the north, both in the proximity to the border with Algeria (Naceur 2021). The ICMPD's role in establishing police schools in authoritarian states is a key example for its shift towards operational hard power, in particular given the fact that this project was not an isolated experiment. Besides the two training facilities in Tunisia, the ICMPD has been also involved in the establishment of similar entities in Lebanon and other countries (ICMPD 2021c).

A key scheme applied by the ICMPD to facilitate targeted labour recruitment for contracting partners is the establishment of what the organisation calls 'Migrant Resource Centres'. The ICMPD has established such centres in Bangladesh (Dhaka, Comilla), Afghanistan (Kabul), Iraq (Baghdad, Erbil), Pakistan (Lahore, Peshawar, Islamabad), Tajikistan (Dushanbe), Sri Lanka (Batticaloa), and Kyrgyzstan (Osh) (ICMPDa). Partly within the framework of these centres, the ICMPD provides for "country-specific pre-departure briefings in cooperation with several Overseas Employment Promoters for different countries including Romania, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Qatar and Malaysia", as well as for deterrence and information campaigns (ICMPDb). While the deterrence campaigns warn against the

risks of irregular migration and border crossings without valid documents, the information campaigns provide advice on work and living conditions in destination countries and information on 'return' processes and 'reintegration' services. The ICMPD still struggles to convince European governments to accelerate targeted labour recruitment. However, in the Gulf, for instance, such schemes are already part of the political mainstream, allowing the ICMPD to accelerate its footprint in the labour recruitment industry across Asia, a path that has certainly the potential to provide the ICMPD with a new financially potent playground.



Circumventing Accountability

The ICMPD has increasingly made headlines in the Austrian and international press in recent years. Spindelegger's expansionist course has given the organisation more political influence and fundraising opportunities in Europe and elsewhere. It also paved the way for the ICMPD to establish itself as an important player in the border regime industry. In the course of this, however, the 'migration manager' has also increasingly drawn the interest of a critical public, a side effect of the expansion strategy presumably taken into account by its upper management. While press agencies and mainstream media outlets report more on the activities of the ICMPD or interview and quote its staff on migration issues, the number of critical reports about the organisation has also multiplied (Schmid / Delaja-Hotko 2023; Naceur 2021; Delaja-Hotko 2023; Campbell / D'Agostino 2023).

In 2023 and 2024, for instance, a Swiss-funded ICMPD project in Bosnia that was cancelled following suspicions of corruption caused a public stir, as did ICMPD's involvement in the construction of a migrant detention centre in the notorious Bosnian refugee camp Lipa (Delaja-Hotko 2023). Following media reports on the Tunisian National Guard's new deportation practices, in which arrested people on the move are expelled to remote desert areas near the borders with Libya or Algeria, the ICMPD responded to a press request from the Austrian Press Agency in an evasive manner, stating it was "only responsible for training, not for deployment" (ORF 2024). ICMPD's work in Libya, politically fragmented since the 2011 NATO intervention and now ruled by armed militias often involved in human trafficking and ransom practices, and the organisation's dubious contacts with the ex-Wirecard manager Jan Marsalek also repeatedly made headlines (Schmid / Delaja-Hotko 2023).

As the Austrian newspaper Der Standard notes, the ICMPD has virtually no transparency obligations (Schmid / Delaja-Hotko 2023). "As an international organization, the ICMPD does not pay taxes, is difficult to prosecute in court, and cannot be summoned before any parliament for information", reads a 2023 report by the German NGO FragDenStaat (Delaja-Hotko 2023). In this regard, another 2023 investigation into ICMPD's activities in northern Africa and the role of the EU Commission in procurement schemes for governments in the region managed to contact several former employees of the organisation, who agreed to share insights on the condition of anonymity. The following excerpt of this investigation exemplifies why governments as well as the EU Commission in particular substantially expanded their cooperation with entities such as the ICMPD (Campbell / D'Agostino 2023):

"The European Commission can't just hand over equipment to, say, the Moroccan government, so they need someone like the ICMPD to do it", [says a former ICMPD senior employee]. If the Commission were to try to push through this type of transaction without a middleman like the ICMPD, it would need the approval of the European Parliament. This can be hard to come by even in a favorable political climate."

In view of the ongoing erosion of democratic rules and transparency obligations on the part of the EU Commission, the involvement of intermediaries such as the ICMPD in projects, aimed at externalising the EU's external borders and equipping police and customs authorities in countries of transit and origin is likely to increase even further in the coming years, thus providing the ICMPD and other organisations such as the UN's International Organisation for Migration with extensive funding.

8. Bibliography

Interviews

Alexandrova, Yva (2004): Interview with Yva Alexandrova (ICMPD Project Officer Budapest Process). Interviewer: Fabian Georgi. The interview took place on 25.05.2004 in the ICMPD office in Vienna.

Gehrke, Lukas / Pluim, Martijn (2004): Interview with Lukas Gehrke (ICMPD Project Officer Policy Developement) and Martijn Pluim (ICMPD Programme Manager Consultancy Services). Interviewer: Fabian Georgi. The interview took place on 24.05.2004 in the ICMPD office in Vienna.

Jandl, Michael (2004). Interview with Michael Jandl (ICMPD Senior Research Officer). Interviewer: Fabian Georgi. The interview took place on 24.05.2004 in the ICMPD office in Vienna.

Lanoue, Jean (2004): Interview with Jean Lanoue (Senior Legal Officer SCIS). Interviewer: Fabian Georgi. The interview took place on 26.05.2004, 11.30-12.30 Uhr in the ICMPD office in Vienna.

Widgren, Jonas (2004): Interview with Jonas Widgren (Director General of ICMPD). Interviewer: Fabian Georgi. The interview took place on 07.07.2004 by phone.

Zürcher, Gottfried (2004): Interview with Gottfried Zürcher (ICMPD Deputy Director & Director Policy Development). Interviewer: Fabian Georgi. The interview took place on 26.05.2004 in the ICMPD office in Vienna.

Literature

Agreement on the Establishment of the ICMPD (1993): Vertrag über die Gründung und den Betrieb des "International Centre for Migration Policy Development". 1.6.1993. Source: = 219 der Beilagen XXII. Gesetzgebungsperiode – Staatsverträge. URL: https://gesetzefinden.at/bundesrecht/vertraege/20003502 [22.02.2025].

Agreement on the Second Amendment to the ICMPD Agreement (1996): Vertrag über die Änderung des am 1. Juni 1993 in Wien unterzeichneten Vertrags über die Gründung und den Betrieb des „International Centre for Migration Policy Development" in Wien vom 26. April 1996 [= 222 der Beilagen XXII. Gesetzgebungsperiode – Staatsverträge]. URL: http://www.parlament.gv.at/pls/portal/docs/page/PG/DE/XXII/I/I_00222/FNAMEORIG_00856.HTML [25.04.2004].

Agreement on the Third Amendment to the ICMPD Agreement (2003a): Vertrag über die Dritte Änderung des Vertrags über die Gründung und den Betrieb des International Centre for Migration Development (ICMPD) vom 25. Juni 2003, [= 220 der Beilagen XXII. Gesetzgebungsperiode – Staatsverträge]. URL: http://www.parlament.gv.at/pls/portal/docs/page/PG/DE/XXII/I/I_00220/FNAMEORIG_00844.HTML [25.06.2004]

Agreement on the Third Amendment to the ICMPD Agreement (2003b): Vorblatt zum Vertrag über die Dritte Änderung des Vertrags über die Gründung und den Betrieb des International Centre for Migration Development (ICMPD) vom 25. Juni 2003. URL: http://www.parlament.gv.at/pls/portal/docs/page/PG/DE/XXII/I/I_00220/FNAMEORIG_00843.HTML [25.06.2004].

Amnesty International (2023): EU/Tunisia: Agreement on migration 'makes EU complicit' in abuses against asylum seekers, migrant and refugees. Press release, 7/18/2023. URL: https://www.amnesty.eu/news/eu-tunisia-agreement-on-migration-makes-eu-complicit-in-abuses-against-asylum-seekers-migrant-and-refugees/ [22.02.2025].

Bade, Klaus J. (2000): Europa in Bewegung. Migration vom späten 18. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart, München.

Bali Process (2004): Bali Ministerial Conference Website. URL: http://www.baliprocess.net [30.07.2004].

Brand, Ulrich / Brunnengräber, Achim / Schrader, Lutz / Stock, Christian / Wahl, Peter (2000): Global Governance. Alternative zur neoliberalen Globalisierung?, Münster.

Buckel, Sonja / Kopp, Judith (2021): Fluchtursachen: Das Recht, nicht gehen zu müssen, und die Politik Europas, Berlin.

Budapest Group (1998): Sixth Meeting of the Budapest Group. Warsaw, 7-8 December 1998. Final Document. URL: http://www.icmpd.org/uploadimg/Conclusions%206th%20Budapest%20Group%20Warsaw%20081298.pdf [20.04.2004].

Budapest Group (2001): Nineth Meeting of the Budapest Group. Sofia, 22-23 March 2001. Final Document. URL: http://www.icmpd.org/uploadimg/Conclusions%209th%20Budapest%20Group%20Sofia%20220301.pdf [20.04.2004].

Budapest Group (2002): Conclusions of the Special Session at Senior Officials level, held in the context of the Budapest process, on the role of immigration and border control in the combat of terrorism, Budapest 21-22 February 2002. URL: http://www.icmpd.org/uploadimg/Conclusions%20Budapest%20terror%20meeting%202020202.pdf [20.04.2004].

Budapest Process Secretariat / ICMPD (2023): 30 Years of the Budapest Process (1993-2023). A Catalogue of its meetings since the 1st Ministerial Conference in 1993. International Centre for Migration Policy Development. URL: https://www.budapestprocess.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/BP_Catalogue_1993-2023.pdf [22.02.2025].

Budapest Process Working Group SEE (2000): Conclusions of the Third meeting of the Budapest Process Working Group on illegal migration within, from and through South East Europe, Skopje, 27-28 November 2000. URL: http://www.icmpd.org/uploadimg/Conclusions%20WG%20Illegal%20Migration%20Skopje%20November%202000.pdf [20.04.2004].

Deleja-Hotko, Vera (2023): International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD): The Migration Managers. How a little-known organization far from public scrutiny is helping to shape Europe's migration policy. In FragDenStaat, 19.5.2023.URL: https://fragdenstaat.de/en/articles/exclusive/2023/05/the-migration-managers/ [22.02.2025].

Dietrich, Helmut (2003): The new border regime at the Bug river. The east of Poland and the PHARE programmes. URL: http://www.ffm-berlin.de/english/publik/bug%20river.doc [12.06.2004].

Dietrich, Helmut / Glöde, Harald (1999): Kosovo. Der Krieg gegen die Flüchtlinge, (Forschungsgesellschaft Flucht und Migration, Heft 7), Hamburg, Berlin, Göttingen.

Dietrich, Helmut / Glöde, Harald (1999): Kosovo. Der Krieg gegen die Flüchtlinge, (Forschungsgesellschaft Flucht und Migration, Heft 7), Hamburg, Berlin, Göttingen.

Dobnigg, Karl (2003): Stenographisches Protokoll der 45. Sitzung des Österreichischen Nationalrats in der XXII. Gesetzgebungsperiode (28. Januar 2004], 203. URL: http://www.parlament.gv.at/pls/portal/docs/page/PG/DE/XXII/NRSITZ/NRSITZ_00045/fnameorig_016894.html#Seite_203.html [30.07.2004].

Drehscheibe (2003): Berner Initiative [Drehscheibe Journalisten-Portal]. URL: http://www.drehscheibe.org/leitfaden-artikel.html?LeitfadenID=282 [31.07.2004].

Düvell, Frank (2002): Die Globalisierung der Migrationskontrolle. Zur neuen Einwanderungspolitik in Europa (Materialien für einen neuen Antiimperialismus – Heft 7), Berlin, Hamburg, Göttingen

European Commission (2025): Centre for Information, Discussion and Exchange on the Crossing of Frontiers and Immigration (CIREFI). URL: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/european-migration-network-emn/emn-asylum-and-migration-glossary/glossary/centre-information-discussion-and-exchange-crossing-frontiers-and-immigration-cirefi_en [27.6.2025]

European Council (1998): Strategy paper on immigration and asylum policy. Brussels, 1 July 1998 (9809/98 CK4 27 ASIM 170), Brüssel. URL: http://www.proasyl.de/texte/europe/eu-a-o.htm [30.07.2004].

Fassmann, Heinz / Stacher, Irene (Eds.) (2003): Österreichischer Migrations- und Integrationsbericht, Klagenfurt/Celovec.

Georgi, Fabian (2007): Migrationsmanagement in Europa. Eine kritische Studie am Beispiel des International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD). Saarbrücken.

Georgi, Fabian (2019): Managing Migration? Eine kritische Geschichte der Internationalen Organisation für Migration (IOM), Berlin.

Ghosh, Bimal (Eds.) (2000): Managing Migration: Time for a New International Regime?, New York.

Gradin, Anita (2004): Foreword. Jonas Widgren – My Friend and Collaborator, in: ICMPD (2004d): Towards a Multilateral Migration Regime. Special Anniversary Edition dedicated to Jonas Widgren (Vienna, April 2004), 7–10.

Hammar, Tomas (2004): Research and Politics in Swedish Immigration Management 1965-1984, in: ICMPD (2004d): Towards a Multilateral Migration Regime. Special Anniversary Edition dedicated to Jonas Widgren (Vienna, April 2004), Vienna, 11–34.

Herbert, Ulrich (2003): Geschichte der Ausländerpolitik in Deutschland. Saisonarbeiter, Zwangsarbeiter, Gastarbeiter, Flüchtlinge, Bonn.

Hess, Sabine (2010): 'We are Facilitating States!' An Ethnographic Analysis of the ICMPD. In Martin Geiger, Antoine Pécoud (Eds.): The Politics of International Migration Management. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 96–118.

Hofmann, Martin / Jandl, Michael / Nygard, Ann-Charlotte (2004): The Multilateral Response to Migration in Europe, in: ICMPD (2004d): Towards a Multilateral Migration Regime. Special Anniversary Edition dedicated to Jonas Widgren (Vienna, April 2004),

Hrebek, Rudolf (2000): Europäische Union, in: Wichard Woyke (Eds.): Handwörterbuch Internationale Politik (Lizenzausgabe für die Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung), Opladen, 89–109.

Human Rights Watch (2023): Tunisia: No Safe Haven for Black African Migrants, Refugees. Security Forces Abuse Migrants; EU Should Suspend Migration Control Support. 19.7.2023. URL: https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/07/19/tunisia-no-safe-haven-black-african-migrants-refugees [22.02.2025].

ICMPD (1994): The Key to Europe, a comparative analysis of entry and asylum policies in Western countries, published as official Swedish Government publication (SOU 1994:135), ISBN 91-38-13812-3, Stockholm 1994.

ICMPD (1995): Refugees from Mostar in European Countries and their Willingness to Return Home. URL: http://www.icmpd.org/uploadimg/(15)%20Refugees%20from%20Mostar%20in%20European%20Countries%20and%20their%20….pdf [20.04.2004]

ICMPD (1999): The Relationship between Organised Crime and Trafficking in Aliens. Study Prepared by the Secretariat of the Budapest Group (June 1999). URL: http://www.icmpd.org/uploadimg/OCandTR.pdf [30.07.2004].

ICMPD (2000): How to halt illegal migration, to from and through South East Europe? A report on the activities of the Working Group on South East Europe of the Budapest Group, with proposals on further action in the overall framework of the Stability Pact. Prepared by the Secretariat of the Budapest Group for the Meeting of the Working Group in Skoplje on 27-28 November 2000. URL: http://www.icmpd.org/uploadimg/Skoplje%20oct%202000.pdf [25.06.2004].

ICMPD (2002a): Biographical note on Mr. Jonas Widgren (Deutsch). URL: http://www.icmpd.org/default.asp?nav=activities&folderid=-1&id=185&view=printer [20.04.2004].

ICMPD (2003a): What is the Budapest Process?. URL: http://www.icmpd.org/default.asp?nav=budapest&folderid=-1&id=93&view=printer [20.04.2004].

ICMPD (2003b): Project aiming at upgrading the border control system in Albania (2002/2003). URL: http://www.icmpd.org/default.asp?nav=activities&folderid=398&id=204&subfolderId=18 [20.04.2004].

ICMPD (2004a): About ICMPD. URL: http://www.icmpd.org/default.asp?nav=about&folderid=-1&id6&view=printer [20.04.2004].

ICMPD (2004b): The history of the creation of ICMPD. URL: http://www.icmpd.org/default.asp?nav=about&folderid=-1&id7&view=printer [20.04.2004].

ICMPD (2004c): SCIS Kosovo (KIP). URL: http://www.icmpd.org/default.asp?nav=scis&folderid=-1&id108&view=printer [20.04.2004].

ICMPD (2004d): Towards A Multilateral Migration Regime. Special Anniversary Edition dedicated to Jonas Widgren. Vienna, April 2004, Vienna.

ICMPD (2004e): SCIS Sri Lanka. URL: http://www.icmpd.org/default.asp?nav=scis&folderid=-1&id334&view=printer [20.04.2004].

ICMPD (2004f): ICMPD Source Country Information System. URL: http://www.icmpd.org/default.asp?nav=scis&folderid=-1&id201&view=printer [20.04.2004].

ICMPD (2004g): The 7th ICMPD Source Country Information System (SCIS) Joint Meeting. URL: http://www.icmpd.org/default.asp?nav=scis&folderid=-1&id264&view=printer [20.04.2004].

ICMPD (2004h): The 8th ICMPD-SCIS Joint Meeting. URL: http://www.icmpd.org/default.asp?nav=scis&folderid=-1&id300&view=printer [20. April.2004].

ICMPD (2004i): The 9th ICMPD-SCIS Joint Meeting Takes Place in Vienna. URL: http://www.icmpd.org/default.asp?nav=scis&folderid=-1&id337&view=printer [20.04.2004].

ICMPD (2004j): Short biographical note on Jonas Widgren, in: ICMPD: Towards a Multilateral Migration Regime. Special Anniversary Edition dedicted to Jonas Widgren. Vienna, April 2004, Vienna, 187–190.

ICMPD (2004j): Short biographical note on Jonas Widgren, in: ICMPD: Towards a Multilateral Migration Regime. Special Anniversary Edition dedicted to Jonas Widgren. Vienna, April 2004, Vienna, 187–190.

ICMPD (2004k) SCIS Afghanistan. URL: http://www.icmpd.org/default.asp?nav=scis&folderid=-1&id269&view=printer [20.04.2004].

ICMPD (2004l): Comprehensive Training for Migration Management in Croatia and FYR of Macedonia according to EU standards, Project implemented August 2000 to April 2001. URL: http://www.icmpd.org/default.asp?nav=activities&folderid=19&id=77&view=printer [20.04.2004].

ICMPD (2004m): Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe. Working Table III. National and Regional Management and Development of Border Control (Projekt implementiert Mitte 2001). URL: http://www.icmpd.org/default.asp?nav=activities&folderid=19&id=181&view=printer [20.04.2004].

ICMPD (2004o): Repatriation Information Centre in Bosnia-Herzegowin. URL: http://www.icmpd.org/default.asp?nav=activities&folderid=1&id=111&view=printer [20.04.2004].

ICMPD (2004p): The 2003 Activity Report of ICMPD (Vienna, January 2004). URL: http://www.icmpd.org/uploadimg/ICMPD%20Activity%20Report%202003%202004%2D01.pdf [25.06.2004].

ICMPD (2004q): Dialogue on Mediterranean Transit Migration (MTM). URL: http://www.icmpd.org/default.asp?nav=budapest&folderid=362&id=-1 [25.06.2004].

ICMPD (2004r): Documents from the Meeting on Voluntary Return to Bosnia-Herzegovina. Conference held in Vienna on 23-24 June 1994. URL: http://www.icmpd.org/default.asp?nav=activities&folderid=322&id=115&view=printer [20.04.2004].

ICMPD (2004s): Refugees and Temporarily Protected Persons from Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Main Western Receiving States and their Possibilities to Return Home (Report on an Informal Working Session held in Vienna on 18 December 1995). URL: http://www.icmpd.org/default.asp?nav=activities&folderid=322&id=125&view=printer [20.04.2004].

ICMPD (2004t): Research and Documentation [Webseite zur Forschungsabteilung des ICMPD und ihren Projekten und Publikationen]. URL: http://www.icmpd.org/default.asp?nav=research [12.06.2004].

ICMPD (2004u): The effective usage of Country of Origin Information in the asylum systems of EU Candidate states (September 2001 – April 2002). URL: http://www.icmpd.org/default.asp?nav=activities&folderid=19&id=95&view=printer [20.04.2004].

ICMPD (2004v): IES becomes SCIS. URL: http://www.icmpd.org/default.asp?nav=home&folderid=-1&id=237 [20.04.2004].

ICMPD (2004w): ICMPD Activities in the Field of Integrated Border Management, January 2004 (Informationsblatt des ICMPD), Vienna.

ICMPD (2004w): ICMPD Activities in the Field of Integrated Border Management, January 2004 (Informationsblatt des ICMPD), Vienna.

ICMPD (2004y): Introductory Seminar on EU Policies Concerning Migration, Asylum and Crossing of External Borders for Turkey. URL: http://www.icmpd.org/default.asp?nav=activities&folderid=398&id=79&subfolderId=18 (20.04.2004].

ICMPD (2007): Organisational Structure. URL: https://web.archive.org/web/20070916042641/http://www.icmpd.org/organisationalstructure.html [22.6.2025].

ICMPD (2007a): Local Representatives. URL: http://www.icmpd.org/646.html [25.04.2007).

ICMPD (2007b): Budapest Process. URL: http://www.icmpd.org/906.html?&no_cache=1&tx_icmpd_pi1[article]=881&tx_icmpd_pi1[page]=885 (Stand: 25.04.2007).

ICMPD (2007c): SCIS Sri Lanka. URL: http://www.icmpd.org/729.html?&no_cache=1&tx_icmpd_pi1[article]=1015&tx_icmpd_pi1[page]=1017 (Stand: 25.04.2007).

ICMPD (2007d): Dialogue on Mediterranean Transit Migration. URL: http://www.icmpd.org/723.html?&no_cache=1&tx_icmpd_pi1[article]=922&tx_icmpd_pi1[page]=926 (Stand: 27.04.2007).

ICMPD (2023): Institutional Statement by ICMPD on "Frag den Staat" reporting. 26.5.2023. URL: https://www.icmpd.org/news/institutional-statement-by-icmpd-on-frag-den-staat-reporting [22.02.2025].

ICMPD (2024a): ICMPD Factsheet. URL: https://www.icmpd.org/file/download/48038/file/Factsheet_EN_Sept2024_v2_Online.pdf [22.02.2025].

ICMPD (2024b): ICMPD in a minute (Q3-2024), 9/16/2024. URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ScsYjz5Ij20 [22.02.2025].

ICMPD (2025a): Silk Routes Region, updated on https://www.icmpd.org/about-us/icmpd-regions/silk-routes [22.02.2025].

ICMPD (2025b): Migration Dialogues, updated on https://www.icmpd.org/our-work/migration-dialogues [22.02.2025].

ICMPD (2025c): IBM Tunisia – Phase III: Support Programme for the Tunisian Government in the field of Integrated Border Management. URL: https://www.icmpd.org/our-work/projects/support-programme-for-the-tunisian-government-in-the-field-of-integrated-border-management-ibm-tunisia-phase-iii [22.02.2025].

ICMPD (2025d): Annual Report 2024. URL: https://www.icmpd.org/file/download/64168/file/ICMPD%2520Annual%2520Report%25202024.pdf [22.6.2025].

ICMPD (2025e): ICMPD's organisational structure. URL: https://www.icmpd.org/about-us/the-organisation [22.6.2025].

ICMPD (n.d.): Trafficking in Human Beings. URL: http://www.icmpd.org/default.asp?nav=activities&folderid=403&id=-1 [31.07.2004]

ICMPD/ÖFM (1998): Auswirkungen der EU-Osterweiterung auf die Zuwanderung in die Europäische Union unter besonderer Berücksichtigung Österreichs. Bestandsaufnahme und Auswertung themenspezifischer Literatur, Vienna. URL: http://www.oefm.org/documents/EBOsterw.pdf [25.06.2004].

ICMPD/ÖFM (1999a): Qualifikationsniveau von slowenischen, tschechischen und ungarischen ArbeitsmigrantInnen und ihre Position am österreichischen Arbeitsmarkt, Vienna. URL: http://www.oefm.org/documents/EBQual.pdf [25.06.2004].

ICMPD/ÖFM (1999b): Impact of the EU Enlargement on Justice and Home Affairs Issues – The cases of Austria/Hungary, Austria/Czech Republic and Austria/Slovenia [zu beziehen über ICMPD.org], Vienna.

ICMPD/ÖFM (1999c): Publikationen des ICMPD und ÖFM [Webseite mit Bestellformular für die Publikationen von ICMPD/ÖFM bis 1999]. URL: http://www.oefm.org/publikationen.html [12.06.2004].

ICMPD/SCIS (2003a): Source Country Information Systems (SCIS) Afghanistan. Project Proposal (30 May 2003, Revised 10 September 2003). URL: http://www.icmpd.org//uploadimg/SCIS%20AFG%20Project%20Document%202003%2D09%2D10.pdf [25.06.2004].

ICMPD/SCIS (2003b): SCIS Afghanistan Status Report. October 2003. URL: http://www.icmpd.org//uploadimg/AFG%20Status%20Report%20Oct%2020031.pdf [25.06.2004].

ICMPD/SCIS (2003c): Migration and Security – the Role of SCIS. Discussion Paper (September 2003). URL: http://www.icmpd.org/uploadimg/Migration%20and%20Security%20%2D%20The%20role%20of%20SCIS%20Sep%2003.pdf [25.06.2004].

ICMPD/SCIS (2003d): SCIS Summary Activity Report (November 2003). URL: http://www.icmpd.org/uploadimg/SCIS%20Summary%20Activity%20Report%20Nov%2003.pdf [30.07.2004].

ICMPD/SCIS (2004a): Source Country Information Systems (SCIS) Sri Lanka. Status Report. February 2004. URL: http://www.icmpd.org/uploadimg/LKA%20Status%20Report%20February%202004.pdf [25.06.2004].

ICMPD/SCIS (2004b): SCIS at a Glance (February 2004). URL: http://www.icmpd.org/uploadimg/SCIS%20at%20a%20Glance%202004-02.pdf [25.06.2004].

IGC (2000): Welcome to the IGC Secretariat. Archived on 4.12.2000. URL: https://web.archive.org/web/20001204202800/http:/www.igc.ch/ [27.06.2025].

IGC (2001): Welcome to the IGC Secretariat. Archived on 01.02.2001. URL: https://web.archive.org/web/20010201152900/http:/www.igc.ch/ [27.06.2025].IGC (2018): In a Constructive, Informal and Pragmatic Spirit. Thirty Years of the Intergovernmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees. The World's First Regional Consultative Process on Migration. Intergovernmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees (IGC). URL: https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/igc_in_a_constructive_informal_and_pragmatic_spirit.pdf [22.02.2025].

ILO/OSCE (Eds.) (2009): Strengthening migration governance. With assistance of August Gachter. International Labour Office; Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. Geneva: ILO. URL: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---migrant/documents/publication/wcms_204168.pdf [22.02.2025].

IOM (2007a): IOM and Follow-up to the High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development. URL: http://www.un.int/iom/IOM-HLD.html (Stand: 27.04.2007).

IOM (2007b): Global Migration Group (GMG)in the ICMPD office in Vienna. http://www.un.int/iom/GMG.html (Stand: 27.04.2007).

Kasparek, Bernd (2017): Europas Grenzen: Flucht, Asyl und Eine kritische Einführung. Berlin: Bertz + Fischer.

Klein Solomon, Michele (2005): International Migration Management through Inter-State Consultation Mechanisms. Focus on Regional Consultative Processes on Migration, IOM's International Dialogue on Migration and the Berne Initiative. Paper presented at UN Expert Group Meeting on International Migration and Development (6 to 8 July 2005). https://www.iom.int/resources/expert-paper-interstate-consultation-mechanisms [22.6.2025].

Klein Solomon, Michele (2005): International Migration Management through Inter-State Consultation Mechanisms. Focus on Regional Consultative Processes on Migration, IOM's International Dialogue on Migration and the Berne Initiative. Paper presented at UN Expert Group Meeting on International Migration and Development (6 to 8 July 2005). https://www.iom.int/resources/expert-paper-interstate-consultation-mechanisms [22.6.2025].

Körner, Heiko (1997): Wanderungsbewegungen aus Nordafrika, in: Steffen Angenendt (Eds): Migration und Flucht. Aufgaben und Strategien für Deutschland, Europa und die internationale Gemeinschaft, (Schriftenreihe der Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, Bd. 342) München, 76–83.

Lundström, Stig (2004): To Read With a Pen in Hand [Selected Bibliography of Jonas Widgren], in: ICMPD: (2004d): Towards A Multilateral Migration Regime. Special Anniversary Edition dedicated to Jonas Widgren. Vienna, April 2004, Vienna, 165–185.

Marrus, Michael R. (1999): Die Unerwünschten. The Unwanted. Europäische Flüchtlinge im 20. Jahrhundert, Berlin, Göttingen, Hamburg.

Ministerial Conference (1991): Final Communiqué of the Ministerial Conference on measures for checking illegal Immigration from and through Central and Eastern Europe (31 October 1991, Berlin). URL: http://www.icmpd.org/uploadimg/1991%20Berlin%20recommendations.pdf [25.06.2004].

Ministerial Conference (1993): Final Communiqué of the Ministerial Conference to Prevent Uncontrolled Migration (16 February 1993, Budapest). URL: http://www.icmpd.org/uploadimg/1993%20Budapest%20recommendations.pdf [25.06.2004].

Ministerial Conference (1997): Conference of Ministers on the prevention of illegal migration held in the context of the Budapest Process in Prague on 14-15 October 1997. Recommendations. URL: http://www.icmpd.org/uploadimg/Recommendations%20Prague%20Ministerial%20Oct%2097.pdf [25.06.2004].

Ministerial Conference of Rhodes Rhodws (2003a): Conference of Ministers on the prevention of irregular migration in the wider European region held in Rhodes on 25-26 June 2003 in the framework of the Budapest Process. Recommendations. URL: http://www.icmpd.org/uploadimg/Rhodes%20recommendations.pdf [25.04.2004].

Ministerkonferenz von Rhodos (2003b): Conference of Ministers on the prevention of irregular migration in the wider European region held in Rhodes on 25-26 June 2003 in the framework of the Budapest Process. Conclusions of the Conference prepared by the Chairman Mr. Pantelis Tsertikidis, Deputy Minister of Public Order of the Hellenic Republic. URL: http://www.icmpd.org/uploadimg/Rhodes%20Conclusions%20.pdf [25.04.2004].

MTM (2003a): Informal Meeting on a Reinforcement of the Inter-governmental Dialogue on Transit Migration over the Mediterranean. La Valetta, 25-26 February 2003. Draft Final Statement by the Chair [= Erstes Treffen des Mediterranen Transit Migration-Dialogs (MTM)]. URL: http://www.icmpd.org/uploadimg/Statement%20of%20the%20Chair.pdf [25.06.2004].

MTM (2004): Informal Meeting on Mediterranean Transit Migration (MTM) Vienna, 5-6 February 2004 Conclusions by the Chair [= Drittes Treffen des Mediterranen Transit Migration-Dialogs (MTM)]. URL: http://www.icmpd.org/uploadimg/Final%20Conclusions_Vienna%20110204.pdf [25.06.2004].

Müller, Thomas (2000): Intime Integration. Kerneuropa entwickelt sich zum Zentrum einer neuartigen Herrschaftsordnung, in: Jungle World 34/2000. URL: http://www.nadir.org/nadir/periodika/jungle_world/_2000/34/15a.htm [30.07.2004].

Münz, Rainer (1997): Phasen und Formen der europäischen Migration, in: Steffen Angenendt (Ed): Migration und Flucht. Aufgaben und Strategien für Deutschland, Europa und die internationale Gemeinschaft, (Schriftenreihe der Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, Bd. 342) München, 34–47.

Naceur, Sofian Philip (2020): Fortlaufende Grenzverschiebung. Über verschiedene Verträge rüsten Deutschland und die EU Tunesiens Grenzschützer aus. Es geht darum, Flüchtende von Europa fernzuhalten. In taz, 7/23/2020. URL: https://taz.de/EU-Fluechtlingspolitik-in-Tunesien/!5703464/ [22.02.2025].

Naceur, Sofian Philip (2021): Decrypting ICMPD. How a Vienna-based organization coordinates and facilitates for the expansion of a restrictive multi-stakeholder border control regime in Tunisia and beyond. Forum Tunisien pour les Droits Economiques et Sociaux (FTDES). Tunis. URL: https://rosaluxna.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/ICMPD-eng.pdf [22.02.2025].

ÖFM (2003): Willkommen beim Österreichischen Migrationsforum – einem Projekt des ICMPD (Startseite der Internetpräsenz des ÖFM). URL: http://www.oefm.org/about.html [11.06.2004].

OHCHR (2024): Tunisia: UN experts concerned over safety of migrants, refugees and victims of trafficking. 14.10.204. URL: https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/10/tunisia-un-experts-concerned-over-safety-migrants-refugees-and-victims [22.02.2025].

Pancevski, Bojan: Colchester, Max (2023): He's Wanted for Wirecard's Missing $2 Billion. He's Now Suspected of Being a Russian Spy. Jan Marsalek, the jet-setting former COO of now-defunct Wirecard, enabled Moscow to fund covert operations around the world, officials say; 'whiff of Silicon Valley'. In Wall Street Journal, 15.12.2023. URL: https://www.wsj.com/world/europe/hes-wanted-for-wirecards-missing-2-billion-hes-now-suspected-of-being-a-russian-spy-61d79ee2 [22.02.2025].

Plattform für eine Welt ohne Rassismus (2001): ‚Festung Europa' in der Offensive. Staatliche Flüchtlingsabwehr,. URL: https://web.archive.org/web/20051202094040/http://www.contrast.org/borders/kein/iom/icmpd.html [22.02.2025].

RCM (2004): RCM Regional Conference on Migration. URL: http://www.rcmvs.org/ [30.07.2004]

Saasen, Saskia (1996): Migranten, Siedler, Flüchtlinge. Von der Massenauswanderung zur Festung Europa, Frankfurt a.M.

Schmid, Fabian / Deleja-Hotko, Vera (2023): Zentral im EU-Grenzschutz, umstritten und kaum bekannt: Spindeleggers ICMPD. In Der Standard, 5/19/2023. URL: https://www.derstandard.at/story/2000146569611/zentral-im-eu-grenzschutz-umstritten-und-kaum-bekannt-spindeleggers-icmpd [22.02.2025].

Süddeutsche Zeitung (2004): Schily weist Kritik zurück. Asyllager sollen „Karussell des Elends" durchbrechen, in: Süddeutsche Zeitung, 22.07.2004, 6.

The Guardian (2004): Safe havens plan to slash asylum numbers, in: The Guardian, 5. Februar 2004 . URL: http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk_news/story/0,3604,889014,00.html [28.07.2004].

Thouez, Colleen / Channac, Frédérique (2006): Shaping international migration policy: The role of regional consultative processes. In West European Politics 29 (2), pp. 370–387. DOI: 10.1080/01402380500512783.

Vertrag über die Erste Änderung des ICMPD-Vertrags (1996): Vertrag über die Änderung und Verlängerung des am 1. Juni 1993 in Wien unterzeichneten Vertrags über die Gründung und den Betrieb des International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) vom 27. März 1996, [= 221 der Beilagen XXII. Gesetzgebungsperiode – Staatsverträge]. URL: http://www.parlament.gv.at/pls/portal/docs/page/PG/DE/XXII/I/I_00221/FNAMEORIG_0086

Widgren, Jonas (1990): International Migration and regional stability, in: International Affairs 66, 4 (1990), 749–766.

Widgren, Jonas (1993a): The need for a new multilateral order to prevent mass movements from becoming a security threat in Europe. Paper presented at the Conference 'New mobilities – element of an European integration', 23/24 April 1993 in

Widgren, Jonas (1993b): Die Asyl- und Wanderungspolitik in Europa. Politische Reaktionen auf den Einwanderungsdruck, in: Raumforschung und Raumordnung, 51/5 (1993), 281–286.

Widgren, Jonas (1998a): New multilateral approaches. Statement by Mr. Jonas Widgren, Director of the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), in Vienna at the IV. World Congress on the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees, held on 8, October 1998 at the Vatican. URL: http://www.icmpd.org/uploadimg/Vatican%20Statement%20Multilateral%20approaches%20081098.pdf [25.04.2004].

Widgren, Jonas (1998b): Podiumsrede von Herrn Jonas Widgren, Direktor von ICMPD in Wien (International Centre for Migration Policy Development), bei dem vom Bundesamt für die Anerkennung ausländischer Flüchtlinge in Nürnberg organisiertem Seminar am 2. Oktober 1998. URL: http://www.icmpd.org/uploadimg/Nürnberg%20BAFL%20Seminar%20Widgren%20081098.pdf [25.04.2004].

Widgren, Jonas (1999): Contribution by Mr. Jonas Widgren, International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMD), to the Conference "From Schengen to Amsterdam – towards a European immigration and asylum legislation", Academy of European Law, Trier, on 19 February 1999. URL: http://www.icmpd.org/uploadimg/Trier%20Conference%20European%20imm.%20and%20asylum%20legislation%20190299.pdf [20.04.2004].

Widgren, Jonas (2000): Statement by Mr. Jonas Widgren, Director General of ICMPD, at the session on "Migrant Smuggling and Criminal Corporatism" of the Metropolis Conference in Vancouver, 13-17 November 2000, in: ICMPD (2004d): Towards a Multilateral Migration Regime. Special Anniversary Edition dedicated to Jonas Widgren (Vienna, April 2004), 140–143.

Widgren, Jonas (2001a): Statement by Mr. Jonas Widgren, Director General of ICMPD, at the Business Dialogue in Munich on 7 May 2001, on border control in a new European landscape. URL: http://www.icmpd.org/uploadimg/München%20Business%20Dialogue%20070501.pdf [25.04.2004).

Widgren, Jonas (2001b): Statement by Jonas Widgren, Director General of ICMPD, at the Conference of the Chairpersons of Committees responsible for immigration/asylum of the Parliaments of EU Member States and the European Parliament, Stockholm, 22 February 2002. URL: http://www.icmpd.org/uploadimg/Statement%20Stockholm%20Parliament%20220201.pdf [20.04.2004]

Widgren, Jonas (2002): "New Trend in European Migration Policy Cooperation", Lecture by Jonas Widgren, Director General of ICMPD, presented to the Migration Seminar Series at MIT; Harvard University, 19 November 2000, in: ICMPD (2004d): Towards a Multilateral Migration Regime. Special Anniversary Edition dedicated to Jonas Widgren (Vienna, April 2004), 152–158.

Widgren, Jonas (2003): Panel statement by Jonas Widgren, Director General of ICMPD, at the Metropolis Conference in Vienna on 18 September 2003. URL: http://www.icmpd.org/uploadimg/Panel%20statement%20JW%20Metropolis%20Vienna%20180903.pdf [20.04.2024].

Widgren, Jonas (2004): Excerpt of Panel statement by Mr. Jonas Widgren, Director General of ICMPD (International Centre for Migration Policy Development) at the European Population Forum, Geneva 14 January 2004. URL: http://www.icmpd.org/uploadimg/Excerpt%20of%20JW%20speech%20European%20Population%20Forum%202004-01.pdf [30.07.2004].

ZDF Magazin Royal (2023): Effizient und dezent: Das Migrationsmanagement des ICMPD. ZDF, 19.5.2023. URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QuKbsIPNi7Q [22.02.2025].

Bibliography Epilogue

Austrian Press Agency (2020): Spindelegger: "Migration steigt nach Corona-Krise", Salzburg24, 20 November 2020. URL: https://www.salzburg24.at/news/oesterreich/migration-soll-laut-spindelegger-nach-der-corona-krise-steigen-95911756 [20.06.2025]

Campbell, Zach / D'Agostino, Lorenzo (2023): How an EU-funded agency is working to keep migrants from reaching Europe, Coda Story, 31 May 2023. URL: https://www.codastory.com/authoritarian-tech/icmpd-eu-refugee-policy/ [20.06.2025]

Delaja-Hotko, Vera et al. (2023): The migration managers, FragDenStaat, 19 May 2023. URL: https://fragdenstaat.de/en/articles/exclusive/2023/05/the-migration-managers/

European Trust Fund for Africa, EUTF (2018): Border Management Programme for the Maghreb region, 2018. URL: https://trust-fund-for-africa.europa.eu/our-programmes/border-management-programme-maghreb-region-bmp-maghreb_en [20.06.2025]

Hess, Sabine (2010): 'We are Facilitating States!' An Ethnographic Analysis of the ICMPD, In Martin Geiger / Antoine Pécoud (Eds.): The Politics of International Migration Management. London: Palgrave Macmillan, United Kingdom, 96–118

ICMPDa: Migrant Resource Centers. URL: https://www.migrantresources.org/ [20.06.2025]

ICMPDb: Migrant Resource Centers Pakistan. URL: https://www.mrc.org.pk/en/services#pre-departure-briefings [20.06.2025]

ICMPD (2016): Migration is about people – Annual Report 2015. URL: https://www.icmpd.org/file/download/50453/file/ICMPD_Review2015_160801_WEB_mit_Flappe_V6.pdf [10.06.2025]

ICMPD (2017): Making Migration Better – Annual Report 2016, May 2017. URL: https://www.icmpd.org/file/download/50454/file/2016%2520Annual%2520Report%2520ICMPD.pdf [10.06.2025]

ICMPD (2018): Making Migration Better – Annual Report 2017, May 2018. URL: https://www.icmpd.org/file/download/50455/file/2017%2520Annual%2520Report%2520ICMPD.pdf [10.06.2025]

ICMPD (2019): Making Migration Better – Annual Report 2018, May 2019. URL: https://www.icmpd.org/file/download/50456/file/2018%2520Annual%2520Report%2520ICMPD.pdf [10.06.2025]

ICMPD (2020): Making Migration Better – Annual Report 2019, May 2020. URL: https://www.icmpd.org/file/download/50457/file/2019%2520Annual%2520Report%2520ICMPD.pdf [10.06.2025]

ICMPD (2021a): BOMCA 10: Border Management Programme in Central Asia – Phase 10, 2021. URL: https://www.icmpd.org/our-work/projects/border-management-programme-in-central-asia-phase-10-bomca-10 [20.06.2025]

ICMPD (2021b): Strengthening Border and Migration Management in Ghana, 2021. URL: https://www.icmpd.org/our-work/projects/strengthening-border-and-migration-management-in-ghana-smmig [20.06.2025]

ICMPD (2021c): The Lebanese Army's Land Regiments' Training School reaps positive results, 2021. URL: https://www.icmpd.org/news/import-news-september/the-lebanese-army-s-land-border-regiments-training-school-reaps-positive-results [20.06.2025]

ICMPD (2022a): Making Migration Better – Annual Report 2021, May 2022. URL: https://www.icmpd.org/file/download/57557/file/ICMPD_AnnualReport_2021.pdf [10.06.2025]

ICMPD (2022b): Migration Outlook Eastern Europe and Central Asia 2022. URL: www.icmpd.org/file/download/56967/file/ICMPD_Migration_Outlook_EasternEuropeCentralAsia_2022.pdf [20.06.2025]

ICMPD (2023): Making Migration Better – Annual Report 2022, May 2023. URL: https://www.icmpd.org/file/download/59451/file/ICMPD%2520Annual%2520Report%252002022%2520Digital%2520Version.pdf [10.06.2025]

ICMPD (2024a): Annual Report 2023. May 2024. URL: https://www.icmpd.org/file/download/61078/file/ICMPD%2520Annual%2520Report%252002023%2520-%252001.pdf [20.06.2025]

ICMPD (2024b): Fact sheet, September 2024. URL: https://www.icmpd.org/file/download/48038/file/Factsheet_EN_Sept2024_v2_Online.pdf [12.07.2025]

ICMPD (2024c): Ireland joins the European migration organisation ICMPD, 31 July 2024. URL: https://www.icmpd.org/news/ireland-joins-the-european-migration-organisation-icmpd [12.07.2025

ICMPD (2025a): Susanne Raab elected new Director General, 5 June 2025. URL: https://www.icmpd.org/news/icmpd-susanne-raab-elected-new-director-general [12.06.2025].

ICMPD (2025b): Annual Report 2024. May 2025. URL: https://www.icmpd.org/file/download/64168/file/ICMPD%2520Annual%2520Report%25202024.pdf [21.06.2025]

ICMPD (2025c): ICMPD efforts led to 16% increase in preventing irregular migration from Pakistan, 6 February 2025. URL: https://www.icmpd.org/news/icmpd-efforts-led-to-16-increase-in-preventing-irregular-migration-from-pakistan-fia-report [25.06.2025].

Georgi, Fabian (2007): Migrationsmanagement in Europa, VDM Verlag Dr. Müller, Saarbrücken. URL: https://refubium.fu-berlin.de/bitstream/handle/fub188/15469/Georgi_2007-Migrationsmanagement_in_Europa_final-1.pdf?sequence=1 [12.06.2025]

Naceur, Sofian Philip (2021): Decrypting ICMPD, FTDES, June 2021, Tunis. URL: https://ftdes.net/rapports/DecryptingICMPD.pdf [10.07.2025]

ORF (2024): Unterstützung für Tunesiens Grenzpolizei sorgt für Debatte, 25. May 2024. URL: https://orf.at/stories/3358701/ [20.06.2025]

Schmid, Fabian/Delaja-Hotko, Vera et al. (2023): Zentral im EU-Grenzschutz, umstritten und kaum bekannt: Spindeleggers ICMPD, Der Standard, 19 May 2023. URL: https://www.derstandard.at/story/2000146569611/zentral-im-eu-grenzschutz-umstritten-und-kaum-bekannt-spindeleggers-icmpd [20.06.2025]

Spindelegger, Michael (2016): Opening Speech by ICMPD Director General Michael Spindelegger, 10 November 2016, ICMPD. URL: https://www.icmpd.org/file/download/51793/file/Vienna%2520Migration%2520Conference%25202016.pdf [25.06.2025]

Ultsch, Christian (2015): Wie Michael Spindelegger zu seinem neuen Job kam, Die Presse, 2 October 2015. URL: https://www.diepresse.com/4832985/wie-michael-spindelegger-zu-seinem-neuen-job-kam [20.06.2025]

ROSA
LUXEMBURG
STIFTUNG

NORTH AFRICA OFFICE