

Mr Margaritis Schinas
Vice-President for Promoting our European Way of Life
European Commission
Cabinets of Commissioners
Rue de la Loi/Wetstraat 200
1040 Brussels, Belgium

Subject: Invitation to headline ICMPD's Vienna Migration Conference 2021

Vienna, 2 September 2021

Dear Vice-President, *Dear Margaritis,*

I am looking forward to meeting with you on 6 September for a wide-ranging conversation on the current migration challenges we face and how ICMPD is seeking solutions and opportunities to move forward. I would like to add that I truly appreciate the long-standing cooperation between ICMPD and the European Commission, across so many different strands of work.

Managing migration through partnership is at the core of ICMPD's mission, as well as being the specific theme of Malta's 2021 chairmanship of the ICMPD Steering Group. It is, of course, also at the heart of the European Commission's own approach and, under your leadership, in both the internal and external dimensions. So it is my great pleasure to invite you to headline the Vienna Migration Conference 2021 (VMC2021), which will be held on 19-20 October 2021. This year's conference, "Re-imagining migration partnerships: Challenges, opportunities and strategies," will examine ways to build and strengthen migration partnerships in Europe's immediate neighbourhood and the wider world.

Specifically, I would be delighted if you accepted this invitation to join the opening, high-level panel on joint responses to displacement from Afghanistan, to share the Commission's priorities for acting now, and for continuing to build partnerships that respond to both ongoing and future challenges for the region. Whether imminent challenges due to the crisis in Afghanistan or continued challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, including a rise in irregular arrivals during what will hopefully be a strong European recovery, we see fresh urgency for both dialogue and collective action to respond and identify sustainable ways forward. We are therefore pleased to utilise this year's VMC as a platform to discuss one of the most burning issues on the agenda, while maintaining focus on continuing to build sustainable partnerships across migration routes.

The VMC2021 will take on a hybrid format, in light of ongoing health considerations as well as the success of last year's virtual approach. The conference will take place at the *Palais Niederösterreich* in Vienna from 19-20 October 2021. A select group will join this physical gathering, with attendees including a mix of ministers, senior officials drawn from ICMPD's Member States and close partner

States, as well as key stakeholders from the world of migration policy and practice. To engage a broader audience, select sessions of the VMC will be livestreamed. This curated in-person format will facilitate a high-level exchange on the latest migration developments and priorities.

I would also like to cordially invite you to the "Migration Futures Dinner", which will be held at the *Weltmuseum* on the eve of the VMC2021 (18 October) for a small group of VIPs and friends of ICMPD. The dinner will bring together migration decision makers and thought leaders to spark an exchange of ideas on the future development of European migration policy. We are proud to be partnering with the Robert Bosch Foundation to provide this opportunity for such a distinguished group to gather in an intimate setting.

I would be very pleased to count on your presence and perspective at the VMC2021. Given the personal leadership you continuously demonstrate in driving forward the European Commission's refreshed and comprehensive migration policy – and your continued efforts to ensure coherence across inter-connected policy fields, which are so vital in managing migration jointly with partner countries – you would bring a crucial perspective that will help set the tone for the ensuing conference discussions.

I do hope you will be in a position to accept, subject to your schedule, and I look forward to welcoming you to the VMC2021. For any queries related to the conference, your staff may contact [REDACTED] Brussels Mission at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]@icmpd.org. More information will also be available online shortly at www.vienna-migration-conference.org.

Sending my best wishes to you from Vienna,

Yours faithfully,

[REDACTED]

Michael Spindelegger
Director General