

Flash report - Meeting Commissioner Ylva Johansson with ICMPD Director General Dr. Michael Spindelegger

A short virtual meeting occurred on April 23 between Commissioner Ylva Johansson and ICMPD Director General Dr. Michael Spindelegger. Positive and constructive exchange of points of views on the New Pact on Migration, legal pathways, Turkey and North Africa.

The Commissioner welcomed ICMPD's support to the Commission on migration matters. In particular she stressed the importance on the involvement of all EU Member States in finding a way forward on the *New Pact on Migration* for a sustainable migration and asylum management in the EU. The Commission stated that migration is and will continue to be part of our reality thus there is the need to manage it in an orderly manner and ensure that something more can be done at an operational level. ICMPD Director General stated to stand ready to support the Commission in this direction.

The Commissioner highlighted that the current migratory situation is completely different from the one of 2016. The current situation requires to focus more on returns and to contribute more to the EU economy with a particular attention to *legal pathways*. In this respect the Commissioner inquired about what ICMPD could do more to support the Commission and what are ICMPD's views in particular as regards as the direct involvement of the private sector.

ICMPD Director General responded that the pilot projects on legal migration are a starting point to build upon future policies. *The Migration Partnership Facility (MPF)* is a good platform to build upon. A recent study carried out by ICMPD for the Austrian Federation of Industry, has come to the conclusion of a need of workers in Austria. This is a matter is not only related to Austria but to many other EU countries. It would need to be addressed soon after the COVID 19 crisis. To this respect ICMPD Director welcomed the idea of the Commission to involve more actively the private sector. This in particular in view of providing the right boost to the needs of market that may not always be aligned to the political considerations. ICMPD Director also mentioned the idea of working more closely with some African countries such as Mozambique and Angola involving more the private sector and linking returns to investment/productive activities.

Commissioner Ylva Johansson inquired also about ICMPD views on *Turkey* in particular to consider cooperation on migration management. This taking into account the fact that Turkey is a member state of ICMPD. According to ICMPD's General Director referred to the suggested area of cooperation by Turkey on border management, in particular due to the current pressures on the eastern Turkish borders in particular with migrants from Afghanistan and Iraq.

Commissioner Ylva Johansson also asked about ICMPD's assessment and future cooperation in *North Africa*. ICMPD Director General mentioned about the ICMPD's work on border management expressing satisfaction for the excellent cooperation with Tunisia and important achievements with Morocco. He also mentioned that Algeria could be involved on border management, a cooperation that may not take form as Algerians are not willing to open discussions on returns. The volatile situation in Libya makes it difficult to assess future developments in a complex environment populated by many actors with conflicting and diverging agendas.

The meeting ended with an open invitation from Michael Spindelegger to Commissioner Ylva Johansson to Vienna.