



## EDITORIAL

An extremely challenging year is coming to an end. Throughout 2022, the Review attempted to cover the key migration developments observed across the Prague Process region, however Russia's unjustified invasion of Ukraine and the atrocities committed against its population stood out as a game changer. The unprecedented forced displacement from and within Ukraine, as well as other migration dynamics resulting from the war have been in the focus of our work. The ongoing fighting and continued Russian attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure may further intensify displacement, aggravate the gripping humanitarian crisis and increase the pressure on hosting communities both inside and outside Ukraine. The war has also forced hundred thousands of Russians opposing the regime's political agenda or subject to military mobilisation to leave their country.

At the same time, this year saw the fourth Prague Process Ministerial Conference. This flagship event resulted in the endorsement of the Ministerial

Declaration and Action Plan 2023-2027 paving the way to the future. In a next step, a survey among all participating states shall identify the priority areas within the new Action Plan that the Prague Process shall tackle as of 2023.

This Quarterly Review presents the latest Prague Process events and outcomes while also introducing a newly launched project assisting Ukrainian consular offices. The issue also provides a statistical overview of key changes observed over the past decade, a brief description of Germany's migration policy reform and the European Commission's new Action Plan to curb irregular migration across the Western Balkans. Finally, our reading recommendations feature a new analytical report assessing the situation of internally displaced persons in Ukraine.

We hope that this Review has proven useful and informative throughout 2022 and wish you all a peaceful start into 2023!

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## Looking ahead: upcoming Prague Process activities 2023

- 26 January ● Online Policy Talk "Looking into 2023: What migration dynamics and policy developments to expect"
- 2 March ● Webinar "Introducing the Return and Reintegration Facility" (date tbc)
- 22-24 March ● Senior Officials' Meeting (date and location tbc)

## Ministers of the Prague Process states adopt a Joint Declaration and Action Plan to boost cooperation on migration

On 24-25 October, at the **Fourth Prague Process Ministerial Conference**, Ministers and high-level officials from the Prague Process countries **endorsed a Joint Declaration and Action Plan 2023-2027**, which shall sustain and expand the Prague Process cooperation in the coming years. Organised by the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union in Prague, the conference allowed the Parties to discuss the most pressing migration issues and agree on a joint way forward in addressing them.

The ministers recognised the severe

security, political, economic and social implications of the war in Ukraine, and expressed their concern over the scale and the humanitarian situation of the forcibly displaced populations, as well as the increase in irregular migration along the Western Balkan migration route. The threats and risks arising from hybrid warfare, climate change or the COVID-19 pandemic also call for additional capacities and synergies.







The Parties decided to **widen the scope of their joint work**, signifying the commitment to deepen the established cooperation, while **recognising**

**present realities and pressing challenges** that require joint solutions. They also called for more **operational collaboration**, including through sharing of information, capacity building, modern technologies and digitalisation. The Prague Process Migration Observatory and Training Academy shall expand existing capacities and enhance the resilience of the Parties, allowing them to react quickly and flexibly to emerging challenges.

Read [more](#).



## Prague Process in Figures

Population	International Migrants	International remittances	Refugees	IDPs	Asylum seekers
					
884 million (2009)	78 million (2010)	143 billion USD (2009)	738.000 (2009)	1.359.411 (2009)	62.899 (2009)
923 million (2021)	94 million (2019)	209 billion USD (2021)	382.000 (2021)	2.107.239 (2021)	215.495 (2021)

Sources: IOM, ILO, UNHCR, UN DESA, World Bank

## The 5th International Border Management Conference gathered in Amman on 23-24 November 2022



For the fourth time, the Prague Process joined efforts with other ICMPD-led initiatives in organising the International Border Management Conference. This year, the conference took place in Amman under the Patronage of the Minister of Interior of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, H.E. Mazin Abdallah Al Farrayeh, gathering some 150 participants from border management agencies of 26 countries, as well as the representatives of donor and international organizations, academia, the private sector, and 13 ICMPD offices.

The conference featured three panel discussions addressing the operational capacity of modern border

management (BM). It allowed for a thorough assessment of the International Border Management (IBM) approach and dwelling into the evolving world of BM and the challenges arising from its evolution.

Luca Tagliaretti, Interim Executive Director of EU-LISA, introduced the Smart borders in the European Union, touching upon existing programmes and initiatives, as well as related key challenges and opportunities. The State Border Guard Service of Lithuania presented lessons learned from the management of large-scale irregular migration. Meanwhile, the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine highlighted

the BM-related problems faced amid Russia's continued aggression. Despite the war, the further implementation of the European IBM principles remains a top priority for Ukraine. All speakers underlined the importance of BM for confronting hybrid threats.

The representatives of the six Prague Process states attending the conference expressed their gratitude and satisfaction with the rich practical knowledge gained and the opportunity to exchange experiences with colleagues from the wider region.

Read [more](#).

## Resilience, Reinforcement and Recovery of Ukrainian Migration and Consular Services Project

In October 2021, ICMPD launched a new project titled **Resilience, Reinforcement and Recovery of Ukrainian Migration and Consular Services** (RRR MFA/SMS), which will

support the State Migration Service as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine to protect and provide state services and assistance to the citizens of Ukraine fleeing the war. The project will

prioritise actions in the Czech Republic, Germany and Poland, currently hosting the majority of Ukrainian nationals under the Temporary Protection.

Russia's military aggression against Ukraine has displaced millions of people. As of 6 December 2022, close to **7.9 million** people fled Ukraine for Europe, mostly to EU Member States, **27,400** applied for asylum and over **4.8 million** registered for temporary protection in the EU. Initially activated for one year, the Temporary Protection Directive has been extended until March 2024. It grants its beneficiaries access to a residence, employment, education and medical care, to name a few.

The protracted war creates new challenges. Due to attacks on the energy infrastructure, **12 million Ukrainians** have been disconnected from the electricity grid and all of Ukraine's thermal and hydroelectric power plants have been damaged. The onset of harsh winter conditions and plummeting temperatures aggravate the existing humanitarian crisis in Ukraine and may provoke **another wave of displacement** both within and outside the country. The crisis also increases pressure on hosting communities. Among others, the question of housing is becoming a point of grievance with the scarce supply across many destinations.



The project aims to contribute to the resilience, reinforcement and recovery of Ukrainian migration and consular governance by strengthening the capacities of national authorities to ensure the safe international mobility of Ukrainian citizens, including preparations for return. The project focuses on measures needed to ensure the safe mobility of Ukrainians, including the efficient provision of consular assistance to citizens abroad. Thematically, the RRR-MFA/SMS project is based on the following specific objectives:

- Ensured efficient services to provide assistance, documentation, information on rights and obligations related to temporary protection status and consultations on voluntary repatriation and reintegration back in Ukraine;
- Enhanced technical and operational capacities of consular services, as well as optimisation and modernisation of the consular crisis management system;
- Restored and enhanced migration procedures in Ukraine; and
- Supported harmonisation of migration and consular procedures with the respective EU *Acquis*, including strengthening anti-corruption measures and human resource management.

The 32-month project is funded by the Ministry of Interior and Community of Germany and the Ministry of Interior of the Czech Republic and implemented by ICMPD's Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office.



## European Commission Action Plan to tackle irregular migration across the Western Balkans

In early December, the European Commission presented an [EU Action Plan on the Western Balkans](#), which shall reinforce the EU's support in addressing the Western Balkan migration route(s) where irregular movements have increased significantly throughout 2022. This is due to several factors, including economic pressures and insecurity resulting from ongoing conflicts.

Building on the good cooperation already established, the action plan also aims to strengthen the cooperation on migration and border management in light of the Western Balkan countries' candidate status towards EU accession and their continued efforts to align with EU rules.



photo credit: European Union

There are 20 operational measures in five pillars in the plan:

1. strengthening border management along the routes
2. swift asylum procedures and supporting reception capacity
3. fighting migrant smuggling
4. enhancing readmission cooperation and returns
5. achieving visa policy alignment

The proposed measures are two-fold: they provide support to actions by Western Balkan partners, and set out actions required inside the EU. At the same time, the Commission adopted its [Fifth report on visa suspension](#) on the monitoring of the EU visa-free regime with Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, as well as Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

## Germany will make it easier for foreign workers to come by removing bureaucratic obstacles

The Germany's coalition government agreed that foreign skilled workers, including from outside Europe, are indispensable to the country's labour market and economy. "We are modernising our immigration law to make it easier for foreign skilled workers to come to Germany", said Federal Interior Minister Nancy Faeser on 30 November. The envisaged Skilled Immigration Act shall make immigration processes quicker, more digital and family-friendlier whilst removing administrative obstacles.

People with professional experience or personal potential should have the opportunity to acquire further qualifications and seek employment in Germany. The reform envisages three pillars for the immigration of skilled workers:

- The **skilled workers pillar** will make it possible for people from non-EU countries to work in any skilled employment if they have graduated from an accredited institution of higher education in Germany or have a higher education qualification, which is recognised in Germany. More skilled workers will be able to receive the EU Blue Card, which grants favourable conditions for permanent residence, job changes and the subsequent immigration of dependents. In addition, the new law will make it more attractive to come to Germany for a vocational training course or university degree and to stay there upon graduation.

- The **experience pillar** will allow persons to receive the right of residence for the purpose of employment and to pursue a (non-regulated) profession in Germany without the need to officially recognise their relevant vocational or higher education qualification and professional experience acquired abroad. However, their salary will need to remain above a defined threshold or have collective bargaining coverage. This shall help to ensure fair employment conditions.

Alternatively, skilled workers from non-EU countries will have the option of submitting their foreign qualifications for recognition after they have already entered Germany and started skilled employment. A recognition partnership with the employer will form the basis for this process. This presents advantages for both the employers, who will be able to employ skilled workers more quickly, and the employees, who can already start working in Germany and undergo the recognition process at a later date. This means in particular that people can start gathering work experience in Germany early on, improve their German-language skills and establish themselves as qualified employees in their company and in the labour market in the long run.

- The **prospects pillar** targets third-country nationals who do not yet have an employment contract in Germany but have good prospects of finding a job. A new form of residence permit known as the "opportunity card" (*Chancenkarte*) will provide such individuals with the possibility to seek employment in Germany for up to one year while taking up secondary employment or working on a trial basis.

The permission to stay in Germany for this purpose will be granted based on a points system based on individual qualifications, language skills, professional experience, their connection to Germany and their age.

The Federal Government also intends to create an option for **short-term temporary contracts** with specific quotas. Under this rule, employers will be permitted to employ workers without any specific qualification requirements, while workers are protected by collective bargaining agreements and compulsory social insurance. In addition, employment with no qualification requirements will continue to be permitted under the Western Balkans regulation.

The reform aims at strengthening Germany's position in the competition for skilled labour, promoting it as an attractive, innovative and diverse country of immigration. It also foresees increasing the number of language courses in Germany and abroad and to make administrative and visa procedures more transparent.

Source: [Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community](#).



photo credit: Reuters

## Reading Recommendations

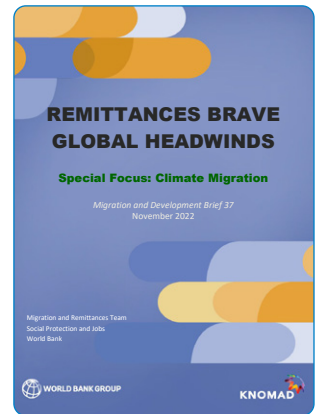
Prague Process Analytical Report  
“**Internal Displacement in Ukraine: The Scale and Management Challenges in Times of Uncertainty**”.

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



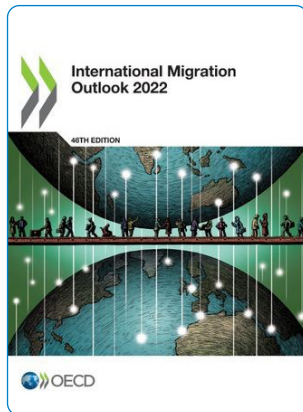
World Bank & KNOMAD Migration and Development Brief 37  
“**Remittances Brave Global Headwinds, Special Focus: Climate Migration**”.

Read in [English](#)



OECD **International Migration Outlook 2022**.

Read in [English](#)



The EUAA Country of Origin Information Report on **Political opposition in the Russian Federation**.

Read in [English](#)

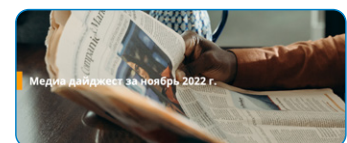


“**Five takeaways on fast tracking the labour market integration of Ukrainian refugees**”.

Read in [English](#)



“**Prague Process Media Digest**” for [October](#) and [November 2022](#)



### Contacts:

Prague Process Secretariat ICMPPD HQ  
Gonzagagasse 1 | 1010 Vienna  
pragueprocess@icmppd.org  
Tel: +43 1 504 4677 0  
Fax: +43 1 504 4677 – 2375