

2021 International Migrants Day

UNDERSTANDING PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARDS MIGRANTS BEYOND POLARIZATION



Friday, 17 December 2021

Hofburg Conference Centre, Neuer Saal
Heldenplatz, 1010 Vienna

CONCEPT NOTE

To mark the 2021 International Migrants Day, the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) wishes to illustrate the E-MINDFUL project, one of its flagship initiatives in the field of migration governance. The event will offer the opportunity to discuss the challenges related to an increasingly polarized discourse on migration and migrants, and how to project strategy intends to address this emerging threat to social cohesion.

There are few topics that polarize opinions as much as migration, often fueled by misinformation, despite experts' reports and economic evidence. Especially in recent years, concerns and fears about migrants' presence in hosting communities have been increasingly amplified in the public discourse, often resorting to oversimplified messages, while the socioeconomic benefits stemming from the same presence are often overlooked. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated further the debate.

As increasing numbers of persons move in other countries to live, study and work, it is vital to create a social and economic environment where everyone feels valued and welcome. Yet, the increasingly polarized discourse about migration progressively undermines efforts towards effective and comprehensive migration policy-making that could better harness its economic potential. Evident repercussions are felt on economies of countries of origin, due to decreased remittances. On the other hand, increasing labour shortages, growth of the informal economy

With the financial contribution of:

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And the support of:

due the employment of undocumented migrant workers, as well as migrants' exploitation are challenges that countries of destination often face.

Aware of the detrimental impact and the divisive potential of an increasingly polarized public discourse on migration, the [E-MINDFUL](#) project wishes to provide relevant stakeholders with substantial knowledge and tools in order to communicate migration in a balanced and effective manner. The intention is to foster social cohesion and inclusive policy-making so to make host societies a place where everyone feels they belong.

Together with the Directorate-General Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME), main counterparts of this project are State authorities responsible for migration and integration policy-making in six countries: Austria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Germany, Italy, North Macedonia and Serbia. Located along the Eastern Mediterranean migration route, these countries share similar challenges in different operational and institutional contexts, providing space for mutual learning and co-operation.

Leveraging the respective roles, mandates and experiences, the project is implemented by the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the European University Institute (EUI), with the financial support of DG HOME, the German Federal Foreign Office and the Central European Initiative (CEI).

The main takeaways of this meeting will inform the results of the ongoing analysis of a stock of information/awareness-raising campaigns about migration, which is being carried out in the framework of the project by the Multidisciplinary Working Group (MWG) - covering areas of expertise such as migration and globalization, semiotics, communication, cultural anthropology and behavioural marketing.

The event is addressed to the delegations of the OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation, the ILO's constituents, key stakeholders of the countries involved in the project as well as experts, practitioners, policymakers, civil society representatives and academia, active in the field of migration governance.

The working language will be English.

Carried out back to back to the webinar, "*Consolidating Alliances and approaches to combat Intolerance and Discrimination against Migrants and Refugees*", organized by the OSCE Secretariat, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFoM) and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), this event is part of the overall OSCE's engagement to celebrate the 2021 International Migrants Day.

Registration

The event will be organized in blended format; participants will be able to attend in-person as well as on-line via Zoom. Zoom access details will be shared upon the registration.

For registration, please send an e-mail to Ms. Magda Jugheli at Magda.Jugheli@osce.org no later than 10 December 2021.

The E-MINDFUL project is aligned with the following Sustainable Development Goals



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DRAFT AGENDA

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| 13:30 – 14:30 | Welcoming lunch offered by the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) |
| 14:30 - 15:00 | Opening Session |
| 15:00 – 16:00 | When facts do not matter: how to bridge the gap between perception and reality about migration |
| 16:00 – 16:15 | E-MINDFUL: “Animum mutare, non coelum”

Presentation of the E-MINDFUL project strategy and design |
| 16:15 – 17:15 | Roundtable Discussion |
| 17:15 – 17:30 | Closing Session |
| 18:00 | Concluding cocktail offered by the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities |