

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

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SUMMARY

ABSTRACT	4
ABOUT FTDES	4
ABOUT THE AUTHOR	5
ABBREVIATIONS	6
1.0 INTRODUCTION	8
2.0 METHODOLOGY	14
3.0 PROFILING ICMPD – FROM VIENNA TO VALLETTA	16
3.1 MAINSTREAMING ‘MIGRATION MANAGEMENT’	21
3.2 ICMPD’S EXPANSION TO ASIA, AFRICA AND THE MEDITERRANEAN	26
3.3 EUROPE’S 2015 ‘CRISIS’ RESPONSE – UPGRADING ICMPD	30
3.4 ‘FOR THE BENEFIT OF EUROPEAN STATES’	34
3.5 ON INFORMALITY AND THE ‘MIGRATION DIALOGUES’	37
4.0 THE ICMPD IN TUNISIA – TOWARDS A COMPREHENSIVE MULTI-STAKEHOLDER BORDER REGIME	40
4.1 SECURITY COOPERATION AND EQUIPMENT SUPPLY	44
4.2 MIGRATION GOVERNANCE AND DATA COLLECTION	54
4.3 REGIONAL EXCHANGE AND COOPERATION PROGRAMS	58
5.0 CONCLUSION AND OUTLOOK	66



ABSTRACT

Despite its substantial growth since its establishment in 1993, the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) is still a relatively small organization in terms of staff and budget compared to other key actors of the EU border regime. Over the years however, ICMPD turned from a minor and temporary consultancy project to an important service provider for European states and a vital player for the externalization of the EU border control regime. More recently, ICMPD is increasingly involved in EU-funded procurement programs and supplies non-European states with border control and surveillance equipment. Since ICMPD opened its Tunis office in 2015, its impact on the Tunisia-EU migration cooperation grew substantially. Yet, the organization is still largely unknown in both Tunisia and Europe. Hence, this report aims at profiling ICMPD's activities in Tunisia and shedding light on its history, overall agenda and operational transformation to better understand its impact in Tunisia and beyond.



ABOUT FTDES

The Tunisian Forum for Social and Economic Rights (in French Forum Tunsien pour les Droits Economiques et Sociaux – FTDES) is a Tunisian organisation, declared in the Official Journal in 2011. FTDES is non-

gouvernemental, neutral, and independant from any political party or religion. It was founded in 2011 in order to fight for people's economic and social rights at the national and international level. FTDES is working on the following themes: labour rights, women rights, environmental rights and migrant rights. FTDES is part of several international networks, including FIDH, Migreurop, Loujna Tounkaranké, Boats 4 People. FTDES has a central office in Tunis, and is directed by an executive board. It has several dozen members throughout Tunisia and more than twenty employees. FTDES has local branches in the governorates of Kairouan, Monastir and Gafsa.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AFD	Agence Française de Développement
ANETI	Agence Nationale de l'Emploi et le Travail Indépendant
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
BMP	Border Management Programme for the Maghreb Region
BP	Budapest Process
CENSAD	Community of Sahel and Saharan States
DGCIM	Direction Général de la Coopération Internationale en Matière de Migration
DGD	Direction Général de la Douane
DGFE	Direction Général des Frontières et des Étrangers
DGGF	Direction Général des Gardes-Frontières
EASO	European Asylum Support Office
EEAS	European External Action Service
EMGPP	Evidence-driven Migration Governance Policy and Practice in North Africa
EMM	EUROMED Migration
ENI	European Neighborhood Instrument
EUROSUR	European Border Surveillance System
EUTF	European Trust Fund for Africa
FIIAPP	Fundación Internacional y para Iberoamérica de Administración y Políticas Públicas
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
HIMS	Household International Migration Survey
HOMERe	High Opportunity for Mediterranean Executive Recruitment
IBM	Integrated Border Management

IGC	Intergovernmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
ILO	International Labor Organization
INS	Institut National de la Statistique
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISMariS	Integrated System for Maritime Surveillance
MC2CM	Mediterranean-City-to-City-Migration
MIEUX+	Migration EU Expertise
MTM	Mediterranean Transit Migration Dialogue
ONM	Observatoire National de la Migration
ProGreS	Programme Gouvernance et Stratégie Migration Tunisie
TAT	Terre d'Asile Tunisie
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



INTRODUCTION

“ICMPD provides policy makers and politicians with the necessary groundwork needed to make decisions.”

ICMPD, ‘About us/Our purpose’¹

The so-called 2015 ‘refugee crisis’ has been repeatedly framed as a catalyst for the expansion of the European border control regime. Although respective policies are already prevalent since the 1990s, the externalization of Europe’s borders has been indeed pursued more aggressively since 2015. The EU Commission stated in 2019 that ‘more progress’ had been made in ‘migration management’ and border security ‘in the space of four years than was possible in the 20 years preceding them’.² The Covid-19 pandemic has similar amplifying effects and is estimated to be used as a pretext to further tighten travel regulations and border controls in the long term.

In a series of articles published in mid 2020, the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) highlights how Covid-19 had already affected mobility, migration and border controls, and outlines possible future scenarios regarding migration flows and

¹ICMPD (2020) ‘About us’, accessed 22 December 2020, <https://www.icmpd.org/about-us/>

²EU Commission (2019) ‘A step-change in migration management and border security’, accessed 25 December 2020, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/20190306_managing-migration-factsheet-step-change-migration-management-border-security-timeline_en.pdf

the EU border regime.³ ‘The world economy is crippled by a global mobility shutdown’ and ‘the road back will not be easy’, the ICMPD consultant Hugo Brady wrote, predicting that ‘a new era of biosecurity is dawning that will change how people move in the future.’⁴ Even post vaccination, states will increasingly rely on precautions and possibly ‘demand to “trust, but verify” foreign assurances on testing, infection rates and risk in return for relaxing border controls or visa requirements’.

‘With visa processes frozen worldwide, mobility between the developed and developing world will be akin to a new Iron Curtain. (...) This will lead to fresh demand for smuggling services by irregular migrants. But people smuggling will now become far riskier, more expensive and subjected to zero-tolerance by authorities’, Brady predicts. ‘For those who arrive spontaneously, border and asylum procedures will now be more onerous and confined’, whereas ‘a re-emphasis on enabling shelter close to the country of origin’ is estimated to materialize. The policies applied by Maltese, Italian and Greek authorities regarding ‘irregular’ arrivals of people from Turkey, Libya and Tunisia since the pandemic’s onset indicate that Brady’s predictions are no distant dystopia.

³ICMPD (2020) ‘Expert voice series’, accessed 25 December 2020, <https://www.icmpd.org/news-centre/expert-voice-series/>

⁴Hugo Brady (2020), ‘Migration in the age of biosecurity’, 3 April 2020, ICMPD, accessed 25 December 2020, <https://www.icmpd.org/news-centre/news-detail/expert-voice-covid-19-migration-in-the-age-of-biosecurity/>

Although the ICMPD series far anticipates what was already adopted and applied in 2020, the organization's outlook should be taken serious as ICMPD is itself a driver and supporter of border externalization and control policies and, above all, a provider of corresponding services.

For ICMPD, Covid-19 constitutes a window of opportunity to further advertise and even push for its approach toward 'migration management', border controls and labor migration, recently outlined by ICMPD's General Director Dr. Michael Spindelegger in an interview with the Austrian Press Agency. Due to economic difficulties and the migration backlog, 'migratory pressure' is expected to rise significantly post Covid-19 restrictions, he said, explicitly highlighting Tunisia in this regard as the crash of Tunisia's tourism industry had already triggered migration flows to Italy. Spindelegger, formerly Austria's Vice-Chancellor and ex-Minister of Foreign Affairs, considers the crisis a 'chance' for European states to better prepare themselves, suggesting to expand 'border protection' and cooperation agreements with 'countries of origin and transit'. He also calls to enhance opportunities for legal immigration as it would be better [for European governments] to choose migrants oneself. Referring to corresponding projects between Morocco and Spain, he pleads for training workers in 'countries of origin' tailored to the needs of companies in

‘destination countries’⁵ – a proposal mirroring the German government’s campaign for the introduction of vocational training schemes in Tunisia and other countries in the region, aimed at training people in line with the requirements of German companies.



Michael Spindelegger (*Director General ICMPD*)
(https://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/1_2018/CV_Michael_Spindelegger.pdf)

But which role plays ICMPD in this regard, how does it contribute to the expansion of the ‘Fortress Europe’

⁵Vienna Online (2020) ‘Nach Coronakrise: Spindelegger rechnet mit starkem Migrationsanstieg’, 20 November 2020, accessed 15 December 2020, <https://www.vienna.at/nach-coronakrise-spindelegger-rechnet-mit-starkem-migrationsanstieg/6815487>

and, above all, what impact does it have on Tunisia through its activities on the ground? Despite its increasing significance since the 1990s, ICMPD is still a relatively small organization in terms of staff and budget. Over the years however, ICMPD turned from a temporary consultancy project to an important service provider for European states. Since the opening of its Tunis office in 2015, the organization substantially expanded its Tunisia operations, providing a range of services in line with its engagement in dozens of other countries. In contrast to other key actors of the European border regime such as the EU border and coast guard agency Frontex, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) or the UN refugee agency UNHCR, all of which are already at the forefront of critical research for years, ICMPD is still largely unknown in Tunisia and Europe. Hence, this report aims at profiling its activities in Tunisia and shedding light on its history, agenda and operational transformation to better understand its impact on Tunisia and beyond.

2

METHODOLOGY

This report applies a qualitative research approach and relies on information provided by ICMPD and its Tunisian and international partners as well as a review of ICMPD project files, news releases on its website, EU Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF) documents and parliamentary inquiries. Additionally, interviews have been conducted with, or inquiries for information sent to, the ICMPD offices in Austria, Tunisia and Malta, the Austrian Ministry of Interior, the Austrian Embassy in Tunis, the Tunisian Ministry of Interior, the Observatoire National de la Migration (ONM), Terre d'Asile Tunisie (TAT), the Tunisia offices of UNHCR and IOM, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) and the Institut National de la Statistique (INS). Chapter 3.0 is largely based on the research of Dr. Fabian Georgi (Faculty for Political Science at the University of Marburg) and Prof. Dr. Sabine Hess (Institute for Cultural Anthropology and European Ethnology at the University of Göttingen) who have worked extensively on ICMPD in the 2000s.

3

**PROFILING ICMPD –
FROM VIENNA TO
VALLETTA**

“We want to effectively manage, regulate and control migration. To do so, we must cooperate with our partners. With its innovative concepts, the ICMPD helps to enable governments and institutions to work on viable solutions. We are pleased that we can now take an active part in shaping this task within this framework as well.”

*Stephan Mayer, Parliamentary State Secretary in Germany’s
Federal Ministry of Interior⁶*

In May 2020, Germany joined ICMPD as its 18th member state. ‘Membership procedures of Greece and the Netherlands are currently underway’ in joining the organization.⁷ This recent – and possibly upcoming – increase of member states illustrates ICMPD’s rising importance for the EU border regime which increasingly builds on intergovernmental coordination and cooperation. ICMPD’s expansion depicts this transformation of migration policies from a ‘defensive’ approach, aimed at preventing migration altogether, towards more ‘offensive’ and proactive concepts, mostly dubbed today as ‘migration management’.⁸ A key institution representing this shift is ICMPD.

⁶ICMPD (2020) ‘Germany joins the European migration organization ICMPD’, 20 May 2020, accessed 26 December 2020, <https://www.icmpd.org/news-centre/news-detail/press-release-germany-joins-the-european-migration-organisation-icmpd/>

⁷Vienna Online (2020) ‘Nach Coronakrise: Spindelegger rechnet mit starkem Migrationsanstieg’

⁸Georgi, Fabian ‘Migrationsmanagement in Europa’, VDM Verlag Dr. Müller, Saarbrücken 2007, pp. 47

Since its establishment in 1993, ICMPD turned from a small and temporary consultancy project to an international organization featuring 18 member states, 388 employees (an increase of 91 in 2019 alone) of 61 nationalities and 30 duty stations or field offices operating in over 90 countries and commissioned to implement more than 70 projects. After the ICMPD headquarter in Vienna (127 employees), its Brussels mission (57), the Turkey office (32) and the regional office for the Mediterranean region in Malta (24), its Tunisia office is one of its biggest duty stations today (19 employees).⁹ ICMPD's total contracted project volume stood at EUR 241 Million in 2019 and EUR 276 Million in 2020 while its consolidated budget (regular and program budget) almost quadrupled since 2015, increasing from EUR 16,7 Million to EUR 58 Million in 2020.¹⁰ Today, the Mediterranean region is by far ICMPD's major geographical area of operations, representing 55 percent of its total program expenditure. Its three departments (policy and research, migration dialogues, capacity building) offer diverse services for member states, EU institutions and other partners, including governments in Europe, Africa and Asia, the EU and international organizations. On its website, it

⁹ICMPD (2020) 'Annual report 2019', accessed 26 December 2020, <https://www.icmpd.org/news-centre/news-detail/press-release-germany-joins-the-european-migration-organisation-icmpd/>, pp. 87/88

¹⁰ICMPD (2020) 'ICMPD Director General Michael Spindelegger begins his 2nd term', 22 December 2020, accessed 1 January 2021, <https://www.icmpd.org/news-centre/news-detail/in-focus-icmpd-director-general-michael-spindelegger-begins-his-2nd-term/>

outspokenly advertises its expertise on ‘border management, preventing and curbing irregular migration, return and readmission, asylum and international protection, combating trafficking in human beings, legal/labor migration/immigration, social cohesion and migration and development’.¹¹

Besides organizing informal intergovernmental dialogues, fostering intergovernmental networks of civil servants and providing consultancy services, ICMPD offers policy development, migration related research, statistical research and on-the-ground operations such as capacity building services and procurement. ICMPD cooperates with almost all European states, Australia, Canada, the U.S. and EU agencies as well as NGOs and has signed cooperation agreements or memoranda of understanding with non-member states¹² and international organizations relevant for ‘migration management’ such as UNHCR, IOM, Europol, Interpol, the African Union (AU), the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) and the International Labor Organization (ILO). ICMPD is involved in projects related to the labor market integration of refugees and migrants in Austria, the impact of social

¹¹ICMPD ‘Our work’, accessed 26 December 2020, <https://www.icmpd.org/our-work/>

¹²As of 2006, ICMPD had already signed bilateral cooperation agreements or memoranda of understanding with Albania, Canada, Cyprus, Estonia, Georgia, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, North Macedonia, Russia, Sri Lanka, Ukraine, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Turkey. cf. Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (2006) ‘What is ICMPD?’, accessed 16 December 2020, <https://www2.osce.org/files/f/documents/e/e/30042.pdf>

media for migration, the Africa-EU and India-EU migration and mobility dialogues, return and reintegration programs, aviation and cyber security, migration governance, academic outreach and ‘border and migration management’ programs in, inter alia, Tunisia, Morocco, Lebanon, Libya, Jordan, Iraq, Turkey, Kosovo, Armenia, Georgia, Bangladesh, Ghana, Pakistan and Central Asian states.¹³ ICMPD’s Tunisia operations are among the largest in terms of project volume in a single country. Hence, to better understand ICMPD’s agenda and impact in Tunisia, the following chapter outlines the organization’s history and its operational transformation, giving particular attention to the so-called ‘migration dialogues’.

Figure 2: ICMPD field offices /duty stations, source: ICMPD (<https://www.icmpd.org/about-us/>)



¹³ICMPD (2020) ‘Annual report 2019’, pp. 22 – 25

3.1 MAINSTREAMING ‘MIGRATION MANAGEMENT’

“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, best governed by a ‘global migration regime.”

Prof. Dr. Sabine Hess, University of Göttingen¹⁴

The late 1980s and 1990s marked a substantial shift in migration related matters across Europe as the Soviet Union’s collapse and armed conflicts in former Yugoslavia, in particular the civil war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, had triggered a significant rise of people fleeing toward Western Europe. Austria and Switzerland were heavily affected by the surging arrival of refugees, decided to jointly respond to the new reality and, in 1992, commissioned the Swedish civil servant and UN consultant Jonas Windgren to set up a bilateral pilot project, aimed at boosting intergovernmental migration related dialogue and research with an emphasis on Eastern Europe. In 1993, the ICMPD was established as a temporary consultancy project, limited to a duration of three years, headquartered in Vienna and subjected to Austrian law.

¹⁴Hess, Sabine (2010) ‘We are facilitating states!’ An ethnographic analysis of the ICMPD’, in: Geiger, Martin and Antoine Pécoud, eds. ‘The politics of international migration management’, Palgrave Mcmillan London, pp. 97

Prior to his appointment as ICMPD’s director, Windgren had joined UNHCR in Geneva as a senior adviser in 1987 charged with the coordination of the ‘Intergovernmental Consultations on Asylum, Refugee and Migration Policies in Europe, North America and Australia’ (IGC),¹⁵ created in 1985 as an informal exchange platform for 13 European states, the U.S., Canada, Australia, IOM and UNHCR.¹⁶ As Dr. Fabian Georgi points out, the IGC had been a ‘relatively insignificant’ dialogue forum when it was launched, but turned into an important coordination platform for UNHCR’s main donor countries in the late 1980s as the participating states used it to discuss and agree on fundamental goals regarding migration policies in Western countries. The IGC’s ‘importance should be by no means underestimated as the concepts of “safe third country”, “safe countries of origin”, “fast-tracked asylum procedures” and sanctions against transport companies were developed here’ and later enshrined in national laws and the Schengen and Dublin treaties in the 1990s, resulting in a sharp decline of asylum applications across Western Europe.¹⁷

¹⁵ICMPD ‘Former DGs’, accessed 26 December 2020, <https://www.icmpd.org/about-us-old-2017/history/former-dgs/>

¹⁶The IGC was later renamed as Inter-Governmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees and, as of 2020, brings together 18 participating states, UNHCR, IOM and the EU Commission.

¹⁷Georgi, Fabian ‘Migrationsmanagement in Europa’, pp. 14

In 1992 however, the role of the IGC started to change. Some of UNHCR's main donor countries, in particular Austria and Switzerland, 'were discontented with the performance of the IGC'¹⁸ as it had turned from a dialogue forum on overall migration policies and strategies towards a more technical exchange platform. In an interview with Georgi in 2004, Windgren – the IGC's coordinator between 1987 and 1993 – indicated that downgrading the links to UNHCR was a main driver for Austria and Switzerland to set up ICMPD in order to gain leeway in tackling immigration more restrictively. Georgi assumes that one reason for turning away from an intergovernmental exchange that directly includes UNHCR was the dispute over forced returns. While UNHCR rejected coercive measures, ICMPD and those who established the organization considered them necessary.¹⁹

In the early 1990s, the IGC had indeed turned into a more technically oriented exchange forum, a feature it maintained until today.²⁰ Meanwhile, Western European

¹⁸Hess, Sabine (2010) 'We are facilitating states!' An ethnographic analysis of the ICMPD', pp. 101

¹⁹Georgi, Fabian 'Migrationsmanagement in Europa', pp. 17 and 54

²⁰In 2020, the German government replied to a written request by MP Eva-Maria Schreiber: 'The Inter-Governmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees (IGC) is an informal intergovernmental cooperation platform without legal personality and based in Geneva. (...) This purpose of current, practically oriented and less strategic-political exchange is, from the perspective of the Federal Government [of Germany], still the focal point of the participation in the IGC. The exchange within the IGC is characterized by objectivity and expertise, for instance by exchanging best practices or current information on legal developments in the participating countries. IGC is, therefore, not a platform for the representation and negotiations of political

states increasingly intensified their efforts in coordinating and cooperating on preventing ‘irregular migration’ from Eastern Europe. Georgi framed the 1991 Berlin conference on migration as the ‘kickoff of a Europe-wide, coordinated combat against irregular East-West migration’. In 1993, another ministerial migration conference took place in Budapest and culminated in the creation of the Budapest Process (BP), an informal exchange platform featuring regular high-level conferences and informal meetings designed to draft policy recommendations and provide operational support for participating states. Until today, recommendations and on-the-ground actions implemented under the BP’s framework predominantly tackle issues such as visa and border controls, information exchange, readmission agreements and the criminalization of migrants, smugglers and transport companies.

Meanwhile, ICMPD gradually raised attention in Europe as a new provider for consultancy and policy advice regarding migration and, in 1994, took over the BP’s secretariat, a task it performs until today. The organization was still a temporary consultancy project at that time. But eventually, three agreements signed in 1996 and 2003 turned ICMPD into a permanent legal entity featuring the status of an international organization. An agreement with the Austrian government signed in 2000

positions of the participating states and institutions.’ cf. Deutscher Bundestag (2020) ‘Bundestagsdrucksache 19/25159’, 11 December 2020, Berlin, question no. 48, accessed 27 December 2020, <https://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/19/251/1925159.pdf>, pp. 33

secured ICMPD's legal residence in Vienna,²¹ while it was granted UN observer status in 2002. In the early 2000s, ICMPD quickly grew in terms of member states which increased to 18 as of 2020.²² The transformation in Europe 'from a zero-immigration policy towards a regulative approach of steering migration in a highly selective manner'²³ had paved the way for ICMPD's expansion as its conceptions of irregular migration, border controls and labor immigration, often dubbed today as 'migration management', became the political mainstream in Europe, formally enshrined in the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam and the 1999 EU summit in Tampere.²⁴ Ever since, immigration policies are a top priority on a national and supranational governance level across Europe, increasingly shaped by a cross-pillar approach that links migration and border control policies to foreign, trade, development and security matters and comprehensively tackles on-the-ground practices, laws and the relations to non-European countries.

²¹Rechtsinformationssystem des Bundes (2000) 'Abkommen zwischen der Republik Österreich und dem ICMPD über den Amtssitz des ICMPD', updated version, Austrian Ministry for Digitalization, accessed 28 December 2020, <https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=20000929>

²²As of 2020, ICMPD has 18 member states: Austria, Switzerland (1993), Hungary (1995), Slovenia (1998), Czech Republic (2001), Sweden (2002), Bulgaria, Poland, Portugal (2003), Croatia (2004), Slovakia (2006), Romania (2010), Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina (2011), North Macedonia (2012), Malta, Turkey (2018), Germany (2020)

²³Hess, Sabine (2010) 'We are facilitating states!' An ethnographic analysis of the ICMPD', pp. 97

²⁴Georgi, Fabian 'Migrationsmanagement in Europa', pp. 34

3.2 ICMPD'S EXPANSION TO ASIA, AFRICA AND THE MEDITERRANEAN

“ *The elaboration and implementation of long-term strategies to cope with the migration phenomenon have to be given priority. Such strategies aim at facilitating early warning, combating root causes, harmonizing entry control measures and coordinating aliens, asylum and refugee policies.*”

Agreement regarding the establishment and functioning of the ICMPD in Vienna, Art. 1²⁵

The mainstreaming of ‘migration management’ and ICMPD’s institutional changes paved the way for the organization to gradually expand its activities, not only regarding the services it offers and provides, but also in terms of its outreach. In 2003 and 2010, the BP was substantially enlarged as dozens of countries across Asia joined the dialogue. After the forum initially only targeted Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans, it features today 52 orderly participating states and seven observer countries including EU member states, China, Iran, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, the U.S., Canada, Russia, Australia and others. Additionally involved in the BP are EU institutions and agencies such as Frontex, the EU Commission, the European External Action Service

²⁵ICMPD (1993/2003) ‘Agreement regarding the establishment and functioning of the ICMPD in Vienna, 1 June 1993 (modified in 1996 and 2003), accessed 23 December 2020, https://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/ICMPD-Website/ICMPD_General/Agreements/ICMPD_Agreement_POD001V01_2004-05-27.pdf

(EEAS) and EASO as well as UN bodies such as IOM, UNHCR, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).²⁶ For ICMPD, the BP can be considered a milestone as it served as a blueprint for an entire series of similar exchange forums, launched between 2003 and 2014, in all of which ICMPD manages the secretariat.

In 2002, the EU Commission contracted ICMPD to set up an informal forum for the Mediterranean region similar to the BP. The policies and measures implemented or advertised for in the framework of the Mediterranean Transit Migration (MTM) Dialogue, officially launched in 2003, are mirroring ICMPD understanding of ‘border management’ and include intergovernmental informal dialogues, capacity building and the ‘promotion of cooperation on labor and circular migration’.²⁷ The MTM initially only targeted the Mediterranean, but was equally expanded as West African states, Sahel countries and organizations such as Frontex, Interpol, Europol, UNODC, UNHRC, IOM, the Arab League, the Community of Sahel and Saharan States (CENSAD) and even the IGC later joined the forum. However, the MTM appears to have turned into a forum with only secondary importance, whereas the Rabat Process, targeting West and

²⁶Budapest Process start page, accessed 27 December 2020,

<https://www.budapestprocess.org/>

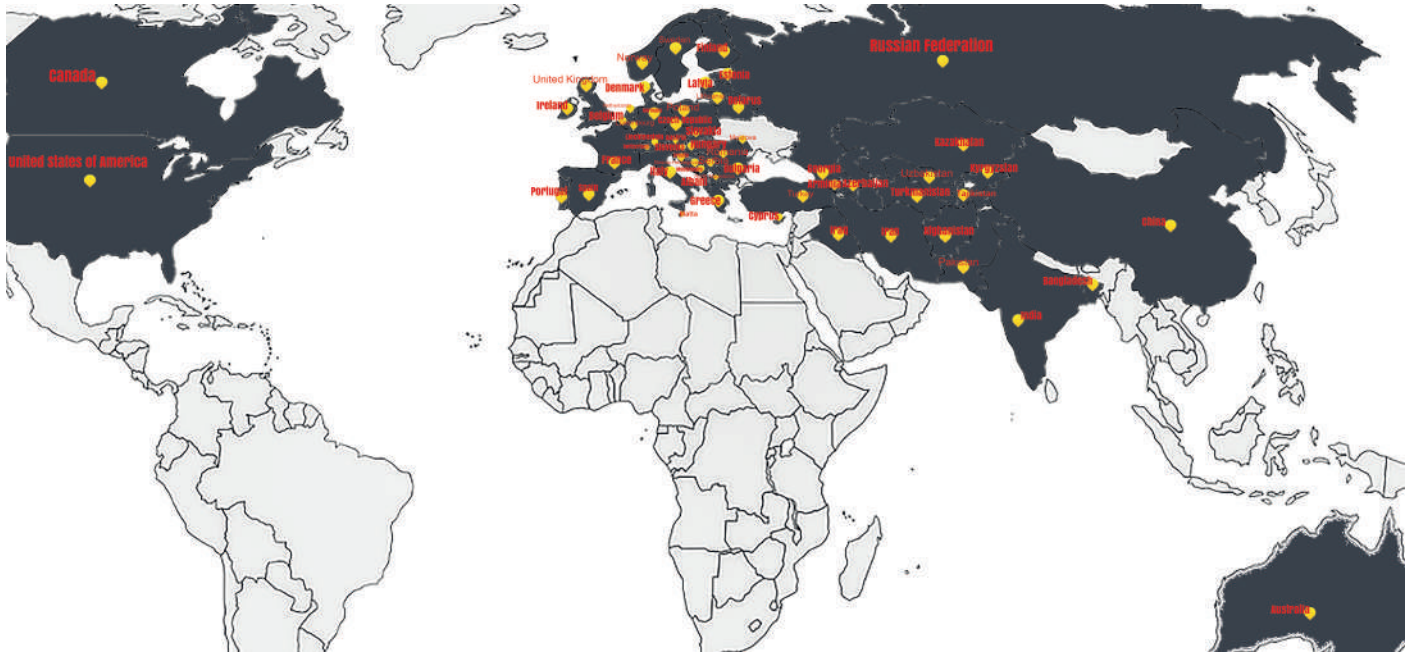
²⁷IOM ‘Mediterranean Transit Migration (MTM)’, accessed 2 January 2021,

<https://www.iom.int/mtm>

Central Africa and set up in 2006, and the Khartoum Process, launched in 2014 and designed for the Horn of Africa region, are today ICMPD's flagship projects for its Africa operations. ICMPD was assigned to run the secretariat of both platforms.

Simultaneously to ICMPD's geographical expansion, the organization also extended the range of services it offers and provides. The intergovernmental dialogues, coordination services and informal consultancy remained a pillar of ICMPD's work approach. Capacity building is likewise already on the organization's agenda for years, stretching back to the late 1990s when ICMPD was, for the first time, involved in EU-funded training programs for border control authorities in Eastern European states. In recent years however, the organization has been increasingly contracted for coordination services in procurement projects, designed to supply police, military and customs authorities in non-European states with modern surveillance and policing equipment.

Figure 3: Budapest Process, source: FTDES



3.3 EUROPE'S 2015 'CRISIS' RESPONSE – UPGRADING ICMPD

“ We need to formulate a global response to the persisting dysfunctionality of the international migration system. Only then will we be able to make international migration the positive force it can be. Let Valletta be that turning point.”

Dr. Michael Spindelegger (ICMPD's General Director), La Valletta summit speech 2015²⁸

The 2015 'refugee crisis' has been a catalyst for European border externalization policies as the EU responded to the increase of migration flows to Europe by substantially upgrading border control projects across Europe, Asia and Africa. Respective projects tackle a wide range of issues including aviation and cyber security, detection of forged documents, criminalizing migrants and smugglers, border control and surveillance, information exchange, externalizing asylum procedures as well as readmission and data collection. A pillar of Europe's border externalization policy post 2015 is the EU Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF), set up after the 2015 EU summit in La Valletta and one of the main instruments for implementing the Valletta Action Plan, adopted during the

²⁸ICMPD (2015) 'Speech by Dr. Michael Spindelegger', 12 November 2015, accessed 3 January 2021, https://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/_ARCHIV/ICMPD-Website/ICMPD-Website_2011/ICMPD_General/DG_Speeches/2015/Valletta_Summit_ICMPD_Speech_2015_11_12.pdf

meeting. The EUTF's overall funding stood at EUR 4,7 Billion in 2020, stems from the European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI) and is technically ear-marked for development purposes.

The EUTF is particularly important for ICMPD as it was commissioned to implement or jointly coordinate seven EUTF programs.²⁹ Two of these projects mainly aim at supplying border control authorities in Tunisia, Morocco (see chapter 4.1) and Ghana³⁰ with equipment and are primarily procurement schemes on behalf of police, customs and military agencies to increase border control capacities. The **'Integrated Border Management' (IBM)** program in Libya, set up in 2017 and worth EUR 90 Million, also includes the provision of equipment for maritime authorities. EUTF project files indicate ICMPD's involvement in the project. However, its Vienna office told the Austrian newspaper Der Standard in May 2020 that ICMPD is 'currently not involved in projects concerning border management in Libya' and not contracted to carry out any tasks in the framework of IBM Libya.³¹ ICMPD is, nevertheless, active in Libya and coordinates a component of the **'Support to rights-based**

²⁹EUTF (2020) 'ICMPD', accessed 29 December 2020, https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/partner/icmpd_en

³⁰EUTF (2019) 'Strengthening Border Security in Ghana', 4 April 2019, accessed 29 December 2020, https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/region/sahel-lake-chad/ghana/strengthening-border-security-ghana_en

³¹Naceur, Sofian Philip (2020) 'Beschwerde gegen Kooperation der EU mit Libyen', 2 May 2020, Der Standard, Vienna, pp. 12

Migration Management and Asylum System in Libya' project, a capacity building scheme for state officials and civil society funded by the EU (EUR 3,4 Million).³² In 2019, ICMPD signed a cooperation agreement with the Libyan government in Tripoli aimed at formalizing the organization's status in Libya. The establishment of an ICMPD office in the Libyan capital is under preparation ever since, but was delayed due to the war's escalation in late 2019.

ICMPD is already present in the Mediterranean for years, but the La Valletta summit was a boost for its operations in the area. Besides Tunisia and Morocco, ICMPD's most important partner in the region regarding security cooperation and procurement is Lebanon. ICMPD is currently involved in at least four security projects funded by various European donors. The **'IBM Lebanon'** project, initiated in 2016 and financed by the Swiss and Dutch governments (EUR 10,5 Million), provides capacity building for Lebanese authorities 'responsible for all aspects related to the management of migration.'³³ The **'Assistance to Lebanese Border Agencies (IBM)'** project, funded by the Netherlands, includes the provision of infrastructure and equipment for Lebanon's military

³²European Parliament (2020) 'Parliamentary questions (reference E-004152/2020)', 26 October 2020, Brussels, parliamentary inquiry/reply, accessed 28 December 2020, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2020-004152-ASW_EN.html

³³ICMPD 'Factsheet: Swiss Support to Integrated Border Management in Lebanon', accessed 28 December 2020, https://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/ICMPD-Website/Swiss_Support_to_IBM_in_Lebanon_Phase_II_Factsheet.pdf

and its Rayak training center, the countrys ‘main IBM training facility’.³⁴ Denmark, involved in ‘border management’ projects in Lebanon since 2007, funds a project implemented by ICMPD on cyber security, providing hardware and software to the Lebanese intelligence service General Directorate of General Security.³⁵ ICMPD also coordinates the EU-funded project **‘Reinforcing Aviation Security at Rafic Hariri International Airport’** in Beirut since 2018 (EUR 3,4 Million). It includes capacity building for airport personnel and the provision of equipment including training software, luggage scanners, explosives trace detectors and the training of police dogs.³⁶

Meanwhile, ICMPD also advanced regarding its cooperation with governments and supranational entities in recent years and signed numerous agreements in this regard, further enlarging its geographical and institutional outreach in Africa, Asia and Europe. In 2020 for instance, ICMPD inked country cooperation agreements with

³⁴ICMPD ‘Factsheet: Netherlands’ Assistance to Lebanese Border Agencies (IBM)’, accessed 28 December 2020, https://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/ICMPD-Website/ICMPD_NL_Factsheet_2019_FINAL_For_printing.pdf

³⁵ICMPD ‘Project Factsheet: Danish Assistance to General Security in Lebanon’, accessed 28 December 2020, https://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/ICMPD-Website/DK_Project_Factsheet_-_Draft_Version_March_2019_PB_MAD_Final_1.pdf

³⁶ICMPD (2020) ‘Project news: Lebanon and the EU seal the year-end with the successful results of a unique project’, 15 December 2020, accessed 28 December 2020, <https://www.icmpd.org/news-centre/news-detail/project-news-lebanon-and-the-eu-seal-the-year-end-with-the-successful-results-of-a-unique-project/>

Pakistan³⁷ and Nigeria³⁸ and a memorandum of understanding with the African Union Commission (AUC).³⁹ Additionally, ICMPD gained three new member states since 2018, all of which are considered key actors in the European border regime. After Malta and Turkey joined ICMP in 2018, Germany followed in 2020.⁴⁰

3.4 ‘FOR THE BENEFIT OF EUROPEAN STATES’

” *As an intergovernmental consultancy organization, ICMPD can (...) be classified as a neoliberal political project. This is also evident in the advanced economization of its political rationality and practice, especially in the field of the highly competitive market of project funding.*”

Prof. Dr. Sabine Hess, University of Göttingen⁴¹

³⁷ICMPD (2020) ‘Pakistan and ICMPD signed country cooperation agreement’, 11 November 2020, accessed 28 December 2020, <https://www.icmpd.org/news-centre/news-detail/icmpd-around-the-globe-pakistan-and-icmpd-signed-country-cooperation-agreement/>

³⁸ICMPD (2020) ‘Signing of a seat agreement between the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and ICMPD’, 16 January 2020, accessed 2 January 2021, <https://www.icmpd.org/news-centre/news-detail/signing-of-a-seat-agreement-between-the-government-of-the-federal-republic-of-nigeria-and-icmpd/>

³⁹ICMPD (2020) ‘Press release: AU and ICMPD deepen and extend cooperation on migration’, 11 December 2020, accessed 28 December 2020, <https://www.icmpd.org/news-centre/news-detail/press-release-au-and-icmpd-deepen-and-extend-cooperation-on-migration/>

⁴⁰Deutscher Bundestag (2020) ‘Bundestagsdrucksache 19/20251’, 22 June 2020, Berlin, parliamentary inquiry/reply, accessed 28 December 2020, <https://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/19/202/1920251.pdf>

⁴¹Hess, Sabine (2010) ‘We are facilitating states!’ An ethnographic analysis of the ICMPD’, pp. 106

Framing ICMPD merely as an international organization or an apolitical service provider comes short of adequately profiling it, given its consistent political vision and overall agenda. In 2016, ICMPD's newly elected General Director Spindelegger called ICMPD an 'intergovernmental mediation platform and think tank for future migration policy issues.'⁴² However, others reject the technocratic framing of how ICMPD and its staff tend to portray the organization and, in contrast, highlight its clearly agenda-driven political practice. Prof. Dr. Sabine Hess, for instance, refers to ICMPD as a 'leading consultancy institution that aims at the Europeanization of migration policies' and a 'neoliberal political project'.⁴³

In this context, its first director's political orientation appears to be revealing as it is, more or less, enshrined into ICMPD's political practice until today. Windgren, in office between 1993 and 2004, supported a restrictive approach towards 'irregular migration' including a resolute return policy. However, he believed that labor immigration to Europe should be expanded substantially for demographic and economic reasons. To tackle these matters comprehensively, Windgren aimed at establishing a 'multilateral migration regime', initially in Europe and

⁴²ICMPD (2016) 'Spindelegger: Migrationspolitik braucht präzisere Grundlage', 29 January 2016, accessed 28 December 2020, <https://www.icmpd.org/news-centre/press-releases/spindelegger-migrationspolitik-braucht-praezisere-grundlagen/>

⁴³Hess, Sabine (2010) "We are facilitating states!" An ethnographic analysis of the ICMPD', pp. 96

later on a global scale.⁴⁴ ICMPD consistently maintained this overall ‘spirit’. In contrast to nationalist and far-right strata of societies and political elites, ICMPD outspokenly aims at encouraging labor immigration for economic reasons and ‘not due to humanitarian considerations’, though ‘always for the benefit of European states’, Georgi points out. A restrictive immigration regime is, hence, a key instrument for gaining consent of conservative strata of society and ‘prevent a [popular] far-right mobilization’. Thus, ‘migration management’ should be considered an ‘attempt to compromise’.⁴⁵

These underlying drivers for ICMPD’s approach towards ‘migration management’ are still present in its rhetoric as its website indicates: ‘Migration is one of the most important political issues in current public debates – frequently connected with highly emotional, sometimes even extreme or populist point of views. ICMPD strives to be an objective and fair-minded companion in migration discourses by bringing all important players around the same table’, the ICMPD frames its purpose, unambiguously referring to far-right discourses that need to be countered.⁴⁶

⁴⁴Georgi, Fabian ‘Migrationsmanagement in Europa’, pp. 24

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 97/98

⁴⁶ICMPD (2020) ‘About us’

3.5 ON INFORMALITY AND THE ‘MIGRATION DIALOGUES’

” *Informality means that (...) one can work faster and more openly. Informal procedures, which also include advising the member states, pave the way for formal decisions.*”

*Dr. Fabian Georgi, University of Marburg*⁴⁷

Informal services are the core pillar of ICMPD’s portfolio and political practice. The organization explicitly highlights its aim of establishing informal exchange opportunities, stating on its website that it has been ‘created to serve as a support mechanism for informal consultations, and to provide expertise and efficient services in the newly emerging landscape of multilateral cooperation on migration and asylum issues.’⁴⁸ In 2004, ICMPD even referred to its services’ informality in its mission statement: ‘Services are provided on request, are not agenda-driven and delivered by way of informal working patterns.’⁴⁹ While governments are increasingly keen in engaging in such informal exchange settings, others dismissed respective practices as “‘technocratic’ and ‘undemocratic’, representing an unconstitutional violation

⁴⁷Georgi, Fabian ‘Migrationsmanagement in Europa’, pp. 54

⁴⁸ICMPD (2020) ‘About us’

⁴⁹Georgi, Fabian ‘Migrationsmanagement in Europa’, pp. 7

of the separation of powers and as a by-passing of parliamentary control’, Hess summarizes.⁵⁰

As of today, respective informal forums have, however, evolved as platforms of primary importance for migration related matters. Hess frames them as an important ‘political technology to create a “knowledge network” since one of its [the BP] very first governing objectives was and still is the production, exchange and distribution of knowledge on the movements of migration.’ Unsurprisingly, ‘capacity building projects in the area of migration and border management involve, as the very first step, the introduction of statistical procedures and counting practices at national and local operational levels of the states involved’ (see chapter 4.2 regarding Tunisia).⁵¹

ICMPD’s flagship platforms to advertise for corresponding policies and practices across Europe, Asia and Africa are the so-called ‘migration dialogues’. ICMPD runs the secretariats of the BP (59 participating states), the MTM (46 states),⁵² the Khartoum Process focusing on irregular migration, human trafficking and migrant smuggling (41 states),⁵³ the Rabat Process addressing

⁵⁰Hess, Sabine (2010) ‘We are facilitating states!’ An ethnographic analysis of the ICMPD’, pp. 97

⁵¹Ibid., pp. 109

⁵²IOM ‘Mediterranean Transit Migration (MTM)’

⁵³Khartoum Process (2019) ‘Khartoum Process Factsheet’, accessed 30 December 2020, <https://www.khartoumprocess.net/about/the-khartoum-process>

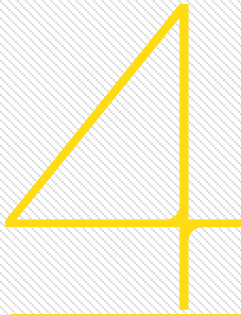
North, West and Central Africa under a ‘broader migration and development remit’ (57 states)⁵⁴ and the Prague Process, launched in 2009 and covering Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus (50 states).⁵⁵ The activities in these forums include working group meetings, conferences and capacity building projects while the processes’ overall objective is to create ‘an informal political setting, providing an opportunity to agree on policy targets and standards for cooperation without legally binding the participating states’, as ICMPD’s outlines in its 2019 annual report.⁵⁶ As the secretarial work includes the practical preparation of conferences, working group meetings, agendas, briefing papers, documentation and draft resolutions, ICMPD’s influence on the dialogues and its political impact on the participating states should not be underestimated.⁵⁷

⁵⁴Rabat Process start page, accessed 30 December 2020, <https://www.rabat-process.org/fr/>

⁵⁵Prague Process ‘States and partners’, accessed 30 December 2020, <https://www.pragueprocess.eu/en/about/states-partners>

⁵⁶ICMPD (2020) ‘Annual report 2019’, pp. 44/45

⁵⁷Georgi, Fabian ‘Migrationsmanagement in Europa’, pp. 54



**THE ICMPD IN
TUNISIA – TOWARDS
A COMPREHENSIVE
MULTI-STAKEHOLDER
BORDER REGIME**

“The Tunisian border is also an Austrian border when it comes to preventing irregular, illegal migration.”

Karl Nehammer, Austrian Minister of Interior⁵⁸

Although ICMPD’s overall project volume in Tunisia is still moderate, the organization substantially and swiftly expanded its country operations since the 2015 opening of its Tunis office. As of 2020, ICMPD is commissioned to implement two training and procurement programs worth EUR 33 Million for Tunisian police and customs authorities and one component of an EUTF-funded project on ‘migration governance’ (budget EUR 3 Million). Tunisia is additionally targeted by four regional EUTF projects and three regional EU programs funded through other instruments – all of which are implemented by ICMPD or jointly coordinated by ICMPD and other partners.

ICMPD’s cooperation with Tunisian authorities, however, stretches back to 2003 and the launch of the MTM dialogue as Tunisia is taking part in the forum. The first visit of an ICMPD director to Tunisia dates back to 2007, whereas the relations between Tunisia and the organization substantially evolved in 2015 with the inking of a cooperation agreement, followed by the opening of ICMPD’s Tunis office in October 2015. Its presence in

⁵⁸Der Standard (2020) ‘Eine Million Euro: Österreich unterstützt Grenzschutzprojekt in Tunesien’, 25 June 2020, Vienna, accessed 24 December 2020, <https://www.derstandard.at/story/2000118319113/eine-million-euro-oesterreich-unterstuetzt-grenzschutzprojekt-in-tunesien>

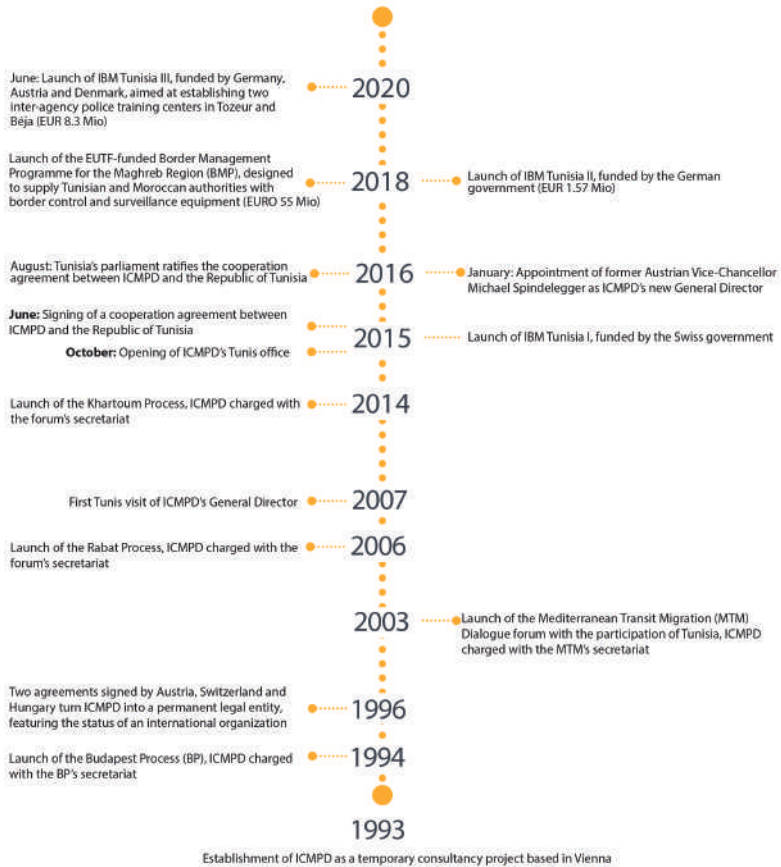
Tunisia was formalized in 2016 when the Tunisian parliament ratified the agreement, paving the way for ICMPD to expand its Tunisia operations.⁵⁹ As the regional EUTF projects are mainly coordinated by its Malta office, ICMPD's Tunis station is only involved here as a subordinated body, though in charge of the national EUTF project and the procurement program '**IBM Tunisia III**', funded by Germany, Denmark and Austria.

ICMPD is pursuing a policy in Tunisia clearly in line with its overall agenda, providing a range of services already applied in other countries. Its projects attempt to shape Tunisian authorities' handling of border control and surveillance matters pursuant to ICMPD's conception of 'migration management'. Thus, upgrading Tunisian police and customs authorities' capabilities to control and monitor borders and prevent irregular movements of people and goods are its primary goals. The second pillar of ICMPD's Tunisia operation contains of 'migration governance' projects, including capacity building, data collection, dialogue forums, media development and academic outreach.

⁵⁹ICMPD (2021) '2020 Bulletin ICMPD Tunisie et Libye', January 2021, Tunis, pp. 16

THE ICMPD IN TUNISIA – TOWARDS A COMPREHENSIVE MULTI-STAKEHOLDER BORDER REGIME

Figure 5: ICMPD history overview 1993-2020, source: FTDES



4.1 SECURITY COOPERATION AND EQUIPMENT SUPPLY

‘These centres will aim to acquire a regional scope as they will facilitate the enhancement of Tunisian know-

how, as well as promote internationally recognized good practices, and serve as the backbone for various initiatives under the Tunisian umbrella to train their counterparts from neighboring countries.’

ICMPD, IBM Tunisia III project file⁶⁰

ICMPD’s flagship project in Tunisia is the ‘**Border Management Programme for the Maghreb Region**’ (BMP), a regional initiative targeting Tunisia and Morocco and funded by the EUTF with EUR 55 Million. EUR 24,5 Million of the overall funding is ear-marked for the BMP’s Tunisia component.⁶¹ The project was launched in 2018 and is scheduled to run until 2021. However, the final agreement was only approved by Tunisia in early 2019, pushing the actual kick-off of the Tunisia component to February 2019. Italy’s Ministry of Interior and ICMPD are the project’s main implementing partners. The BMP Steering Committee is chaired by the EU and both beneficiary countries, whereas Frontex has been invited to join in as an observer. The primary beneficiary in Tunisia is the Garde Maritime Nationale, the coast guard branch of the Ministry of Interior. The project aims at enhancing ‘cross-regional’ and inter-agency cooperation of authorities in charge of border control and surveillance and the establishment of ‘systemized entry-exit data management’. In order to implement the latter,

⁶⁰ICMPD ‘Support programme to the Tunisian government in the field of IBM – Phase III’, printout

⁶¹European Parliament (2020) ‘Parliamentary questions (reference E-004152/2020)’

the program supports ‘national border agencies in collecting data at border crossing points, outposts and coastal stations to be further analyzed at a central level.’⁶² However, the main focus of the program is the provision of equipment and surveillance technology for Tunisian authorities. About 70 percent of the project funds are destined for the procurement of equipment alone.

In the project’s first stage, ICMPD and Tunisian authorities conducted inventory checks, including working visits in almost all coastal regions of Tunisia to identify the equipment needed to reinforce the Garde Maritime’s capacities in line with the program proposal. After coordinating on a list of material to be requested, the project is now in its procurement phase. While the Morocco component witnessed a quicker kick-off as tenders were already launched in 2019,⁶³ ICMPD released the first tenders for purchasing equipment for Tunisia only in mid 2020. At least six tenders have been concluded in the BMP framework as of January 2021:

⁶²EUTF (2018) ‘Action fiche Border Management Programme for the Maghreb region’, accessed 30 December 2020, <https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/sites/eutf/files/t05-eutf-noa-reg-07.pdf>, pp. 12

⁶³Under the BMP framework and on behalf of Moroccan authorities, ICMPD concluded contracts for the provision of, inter alia, fingerprint scanners (EUR 1,67 Million), IT and camera equipment (EUR 4,84 Million), 307 vehicles and 227 motorbikes (EUR 8,9 Million), video surveillance equipment (EUR 2 Million), travel and ID examination equipment (EUR 519,408) and radio equipment (EUR 2,1 Million). cf. Naceur, Sofian Philip (2020) ‘Wiener Expertise’, 3 July 2020, Junge Welt, Berlin, pp.6 and ICMPD (2021) ‘Contract award notices’, accessed 2 January 2020, <https://www.icmpd.org/work-with-us/procurement/contract-award-notice/>

- 1) Navigational radars and thermal cameras, EUR 1,778 Million⁶⁴
- 2) NAVTEX equipment (navigation and communication tool for vessels), EUR 55,960⁶⁵
- 3) Remotely operated vehicles and side scan sonar, EUR 194,217⁶⁶
- 4) Operational room furniture and IT equipment, EUR 898,138⁶⁷
- 5) Study of feasibility, design and project management assistance for the deployment of an LTE network and radars, EUR 86,100⁶⁸
- 6) Navigational radars, EUR 885,000⁶⁹

⁶⁴ICMPD (2020) 'Award notice: Supply of navigational radars and thermal cameras in the scope of the BMP – Tunisia component', 30 December 2020, accessed 2 January 2021, https://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/ICMPD-Website/Procurement/Award_notice_No_20.028_-_ONETECH_INTERTECH_EAGLE_CURRENTCORP.pdf

⁶⁵ICMPD (2020) 'Award notice: Supply of NAVTEX equipment in the scope of the BMP – Tunisia component', 6 October 2020, accessed 2 January 2021, https://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/ICMPD-Website/Procurement/Award_notice_No_20.021_-_NAVTEX_Equipment_-_MS_Marine.pdf

⁶⁶ICMPD (2020) 'Award notice: Supply of remotely operated vehicles and side scan sonar equipment in the scope of the BMP – Tunisia component', 4 November 2020, accessed 2 January 2021, https://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/ICMPD-Website/Procurement/Award_notice_No_20.022_-_Intertech_group_Eagle.pdf

⁶⁷ICMPD (2020) 'Award notice: Supply of IT related equipment and operational room furniture in the scope of the BMP – Tunisia component', 6 October 2020, accessed 2 January 2021, https://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/ICMPD-Website/Procurement/Award_notice_No_20.013_IT_related_Equipment_-_MULTICOM_TMI_ONETECH.pdf

⁶⁸ICMPD (2020) 'Award notice: Déploiement d'un réseau de transmission LTE et de radars: étude de faisabilité, design et assistance à maîtrise d'ouvrage', 1 October 2020, accessed 5 January 2021, https://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/ICMPD-Website/Procurement/Award_notice_No_20.015_-_Transmission_Study_-_TELCOTEC.pdf

⁶⁹ICMPD (2021) 'Award notice: Supply of navigational radars in the scope of the BMP', 12 January 2021, accessed 3 February 2021,

Five tenders have been awarded to Tunisian companies, including Multicom, Onetech Business Solutions and Tunisie Micro-Informatique, while two tenders were granted to a consortium of the Tunisian Eagle SARL and the Lebanese Intertech Group and one to the French companies Furuno and Merignac. A tender for the provision of vehicle mounted mobile surveillance radars, published in November 2020,⁷⁰ and a procurement notice for maritime surveillance drones, released in January 2021, are still vacant as of early 2021.⁷¹ Meanwhile, the BMP also includes training schemes for Tunisian officials, organized – but not implemented – by ICMPD in line with the curricula agreed upon by the participating partners. A first training on ISO 9001 quality management standards was held in December 2019.

A crucial part of the BMP is its maritime surveillance segment. It involves additional authorities from Tunisia including the Direction Générale de l’Informatique, the Direction des Transmissions, the Services Techniques de la Garde Nationale, the Autorité

https://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/ICMPD-Website/Procurement/Award_notice_No_20.042_-_Navigational_Radars_-_FURUNO_FR.pdf

⁷⁰ICMPD (2020) ‘Supply procurement notice: Supply of vehicle mounted mobile surveillance radars in the scope of the BMP – Tunisia component’, 12 October 2020, accessed 2 January 2021, https://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/ICMPD-Website/Procurement/Procurement_Notice_PN_-_VMSR.pdf

⁷¹ICMPD (2020) ‘Supply procurement notice: Supply of maritime surveillance drones in the scope of the BMP – Tunisia component’, 14 December 2020, accessed 2 January 2021, https://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/ICMPD-Website/Procurement/Procurement_Notice_PN_-_MSD.pdf

de Régulation des Communications Électroniques, the Ministry of Defense and the Navy.⁷² The BMP's maritime segment features the '**Integrated System for Maritime Surveillance**' (ISMariS), a nationally developed software solution platform that 'centralizes information coming from naval assets at sea and from coastal radars' and displays them on an interactive map, according to the EU Commission's reply to an inquiry by MEP Özlem Demirel in the EU Parliament.⁷³ ISMariS was designed and installed by the IT company Tunisia Software Technologie and connects VHS radar sensors, GPS positions and surveillance cameras 'on board of selected Tunisian Coast Guard vessels, control posts, and command centres within the Gulf of Tunis zone' to improve mutual communication. The system is currently in its final testing phase and not connected to any non-Tunisian entity such as Italian border control authorities, the European Border Surveillance System (EUROSUR) or Frontex, the EU Commission claims.

ISMariS, however, was launched in the framework of a different program and piloted in the first phase of '**IBM Tunisia**', a bilateral cooperation project set up in 2015, financed by the Swiss government and implemented

⁷²EUTF (2018) 'Action fiche Border Management Programme for the Maghreb region', pp. 13/14

⁷³European Parliament (2020) 'Parliamentary questions (reference E-003820/2020)', 20 October 2020, Brussels, parliamentary inquiry/reply, accessed 2 January 2021, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2020-003820-ASW_EN.html

by ICMPD. The ISMariS component was later retracted from IBM and assigned to the BMP.⁷⁴ Meanwhile, the IBM project was redesigned and substantially expanded. After the Swiss-funded piloting phase, the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs took over the sponsoring for IBM's second phase (December 2018 – November 2019, EUR 1,57 Million).⁷⁵ The German-funded project cycle included a feasibility study, the development of 'border' training modules, training-of-trainers and the preparations for the construction of two training facilities for Tunisian police officials in North-West and South-West Tunisia.⁷⁶

On a press conference in Vienna in June 2020, ICMPD's director and Austria's Minister of Interior Karl Nehammer announced the launch of phase III of the IBM Tunisia project, featuring a budget of EUR 8,3 Million co-funded by Germany (EUR 3,9 Million), Austria (EUR 990,000) and Denmark (EUR 3,4 Million).⁷⁷ The project is scheduled to run until 2023 and supported by the German and Danish Ministries of Foreign Affairs and the Austrian Ministry of Interior. The Tunisian authorities involved are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Direction

⁷⁴European Parliament (2020) 'Parliamentary questions (reference E-000891/2020)', 29 April 2020, Brussels, parliamentary inquiry/reply, accessed 2 January 2021, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2020-000891-ASW_EN.html

⁷⁵ICMPD (2020) 'ICMPD Tunisia Bulletin 2019', January 2020, Tunis, pp. 2

⁷⁶ICMPD (2018) 'Support Programme to the Tunisian government in the area of IBM – Phase II', 2018, accessed 2 January 2021,

https://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/ICMPD-Website/IBM_Tunisia-II_Factsheet_EN.pdf

⁷⁷Der Standard (2020) 'Eine Million Euro: Österreich unterstützt Grenzschutzprojekt in Tunesien'

Général de la Douane (DGD) under the Ministry of Finance and two branches of the Ministry of Interior, namely the Direction Général des Frontières et des Étrangers (DGFE) and the Direction Général des Gardes-Frontières (DGGF). A project file indicates that the project was agreed upon on principles in the framework of the Rabat Process and is a ‘direct response’ to the 2013 conference on border security in Rabat.

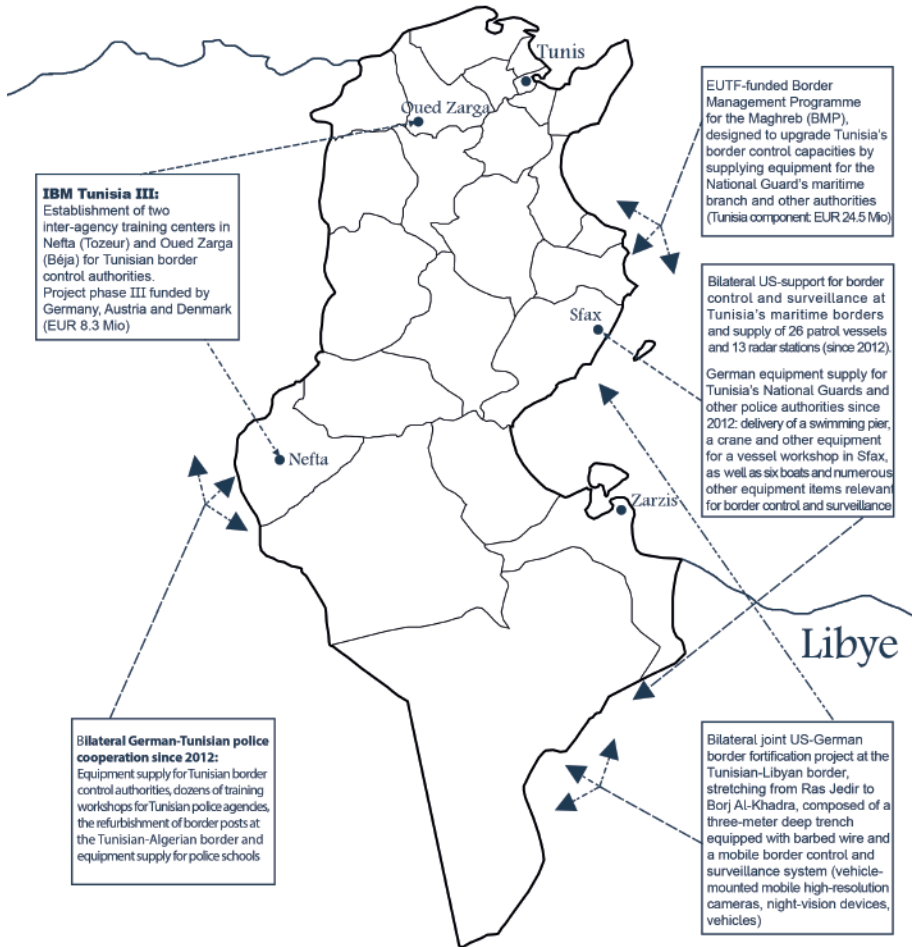
The project contains four components, including the development of inter-agency training manuals for ‘border management’, the further extension and modernization of local and regional operational rooms of DGD, DGFE and DGGF to improve border control and surveillance capacities, and the expansion of the Smart Gate online registration system, initially aimed at facilitating the provision of ‘temporary driving permits to foreign vehicles entering Tunisia.’⁷⁸ The Smart Gate is destined for the Tunisian customs and its pilots have been installed in the port of La Goulette in Tunis and in Malloula, the border crossing to Algeria near the city of Tabarka. However, the main component of IBM III is the establishment of two inter-agency training centers in the provinces of Béja and Tozeur where border guards and officers from DGGF, DGFE and DGD are to be trained in line with the ‘border management’ training curriculum

⁷⁸ICMPD (2020) ‘Support programme to the Tunisian government in the area of IBM – Phase III’, printout

already drafted in the IBM framework. Denmark and Austria jointly finance the construction of the training facility in Nefta near Tozeur, to be set up within an existing site of the Brigade de Surveillance et de Recherche des Douanes. Germany funds the center in Oued Zarga in the governorate of Béja, to be established on the premises of the commando school of the Ministry of Interior’s Garde Nationale. Since late 2020, the project is in its tendering and contracting phase. The construction on both premises is scheduled to start in late 2021 and estimated to be finalized in 2023, according to Austria’s Ministry of Interior. These ‘inter-agency centers of excellence will have a national focus in the short-term’, but in the medium and long-run ‘aim to acquire a regional scope’ and are intended to ‘serve as the backbone for various initiatives under the Tunisian umbrella to train their counterparts from neighboring countries.’⁷⁹

⁷⁹Ibid.

Figure 6: Europe-funded border control and surveillance projects in Tunisia (selection), source: FTDES



4.2 MIGRATION GOVERNANCE AND DATA COLLECTION

”How can one make a political strategy if one does not have statistics?”

Donya Smida, Director of ICMPD’s Tunis office

ICMPD’s most important project in Tunisia – besides BMP and IBM III – is the EUTF-funded program **‘Support to the Implementation of the National Strategy of Migration of Tunisia’**, referred to by its French acronym **ProGreS** (**‘Programme Gouvernance et Stratégie Migration Tunisie’**). The project exclusively targets Tunisia, mainly contains of capacity building in the area of ‘migration governance’ and is scheduled to run from 2018 until 2021 on an overall budget of EUR 13,4 Million (EUR 12,8 Million from the EUTF and EUR 600,000 from the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, exclusively destined for component two).⁸⁰

ICMPD’s Tunis office is only commissioned for the implementation of component one and the overall coordination of the four project components, including communication and visibility, and is, hence, not involved in actions and services executed in the framework of the

⁸⁰EUTF (2016) ‘Action fiche Favoriser la mise en oeuvre de la stratégie nationale migratoire de la Tunisie’, accessed 30 December 2020, https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/sites/euetfa/files/action-document-tunisie-action-fiche-20161216_fr.pdf

other project modules. Component two (‘Mobilization of the Diaspora’) was commissioned to the state-owned German development aid company Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and aims at creating job and investment opportunities. For this purpose, GIZ cooperates with multiple Tunisian authorities including the Ministry for Social Affairs, the Ministry of Industries and local councils. Component three (‘Socio-economic Reintegration of Migrants’) is implemented by the state-owned French development agency Expertise France in the area of ‘reintegration of migrants and Tunisian returnees’, aimed at providing support for 200 Tunisian’s who returned from Germany, Belgium, France and Switzerland as well as the reintegration of 15 Sub-Saharan nationals in their respective country of origin. Component four (‘Local Management of Migration’) is run by the governmental French Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and the British-American NGO Mercy Corps and contains of local ‘migration governance’ projects.⁸¹

In the framework of ProGreS’ component one (budget EUR 3 Million), ICMPD is primarily cooperating with the Observatoire National de la Migration (ONM), the Direction Général de la Coopération Internationale en Matière de Migration (DGCIM), both under the Ministry of Social Affairs, and the Institut National de la Statistique

⁸¹ICMPD (2018) ‘ProGreS Tunisie’, brochure, printout

(INS). This component predominantly contains of support for the ONM and the DGCIM in implementing Tunisia’s ‘National Strategy of Migration’, initially drafted in 2013 and revised in 2015 and 2017. ICMPD provides the ONM, the DGCIM, the Agence Nationale de l’Emploi et le Travail Indépendant (ANETI) and other state institutions and agencies with capacity building such as training and workshops on budgeting and developing indicators and action plans. Additionally, IT equipment worth EUR 156,901 has been purchased on behalf of the authorities involved.⁸²

The second pillar of ProGreS’ component one is a data collection project, funded through ICMPD, monitored by the ONM and executed by the INS. The Tunisia Household International Migration Survey (HIMS) was launched in July 2020 and aims at collecting a representative sample of all groups concerned by migration across Tunisia. It addresses Tunisian returnees, Tunisian ‘irregular migrants’ living abroad and foreign migrants residing in Tunisia (irregular and regular status), according to the INS. In mid 2020, 160 people have been trained on how to conduct the survey on-the-ground. The data collection started in mid 2020 and is scheduled to be concluded in March 2021. The INS puts the overall

⁸²ICMPD (2019) ‘Award notice: Supply of IT equipment in the scope of the ProGreS Migration, component migration governance’, 20 December 2019, accessed 5 January 2021, https://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/ICMPD-Website/Procurement/Supply_of_IT_Equipment_-_Award_Notice_-_S2i.pdf

expenses of the survey at TND 5 Million.⁸³ Similar surveys have been already conducted in Jordan, Egypt⁸⁴ and Morocco. However, the HIMS Morocco survey exclusively targeted Moroccan nationals while the data samples in Egypt and Jordan came short in profiling foreign nationals, ICMPD's Tunis office says.

Meanwhile, ICMPD also coordinates with UNHCR although both do not cooperate directly on an operational level. However, in order to avoid overlapping of actions, ICMPD engages in regular meetings with UN agencies to exchange on their operations, including IOM and the UN refugee agency. The latter was or still is involved in two projects linked to ICMPD: The IBM I project (2016 – 2018) and an EUTF-funded monitoring program. Whereas ICMPD was in charge of IBM's first component on 'border management', UNHCR was contracted for the international protection module, though 'there were no links between the two components', UNHCR says upon request. Additionally, 'UNHCR received EUTF funds as contribution to UNHCR programs starting from 2020. In this framework and as the counterpart of the EU for the monitoring scheme, ICMPD has been asked to negotiate the indicators with UNHCR', the agency's Tunis office

⁸³Agence Tunis Afrique Presse (2020) 'First national survey on migration and migrants in Tunisia launched', 22 July 2020, Tunis, accessed 5 January 2021, <https://www.tap.info.tn/en/Portal-Society/12906336-first-national>

⁸⁴Faris, Samir and Rawia El-Batrawy, eds. (2013) 'Egypt Household International Migration Survey 2013', Cairo, Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS)

says, confirming that it shares corresponding data with ICMPD twice a year as requested by the EU. ‘ICMPD has no influence on how UNHCR designs and implements its Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy’, the UN agency’s Tunis office claims.

4.3 REGIONAL EXCHANGE AND COOPERATION PROGRAMS

” Since 2015, the ENI-funded Mediterranean City-to-City Migration (MC2CM) project has brought migration to the forefront of respective cities that, until recently, had limited experience in the local governance of migration.”

*MC2CM action fiche*⁸⁵

ICMPD has been commissioned to implement or jointly implement six EUTF projects addressing Tunisia including five regional programs (among them the BMP) and the national project ProGreS. Additionally, ICMPD is in charge of the joint implementation of three other projects funded by the EU through other funding instruments. Jointly with the Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime, ICMPD coordinates the EUTF-funded ‘**Technical Cooperation Facility**’, a monitoring and evaluation program targeting Tunisia,

⁸⁵EUTF (2020) ‘Action fiche Mediterranean-City-to-City-Migration (MC2CM) Phase II’, 7 January 2020, https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/sites/euetfa/files/action_fiche_revised.docx.pdf

Algeria, Morocco, Libya and Egypt (budget EUR 5,2 Million),⁸⁶ and the **‘Research and Evidence Facility’** (budget EUR 19 Million), designed to ‘conduct, synthesize, disseminate and make use of new and existing research on the drivers and dynamics of the root causes of instability, irregular migration and forced displacement in West and North Africa.’ The project contains of ‘multidimensional empirical, quantitative and qualitative research’, aims at analyzing best practices and addresses 17 countries in West and North Africa and the Sahel region.⁸⁷ ICMPD is also in charge of the **‘Evidence-driven Migration Governance Policy and Practice in North Africa’** (eMGPP) project, an EUTF initiative designed to establish a network of researchers across North Africa (budget EUR 2,8 Million). In this context, the Tunisian company One-to-One for Polling and Research was awarded a tender worth EUR 257,560⁸⁸ for drafting, setting up and conducting an online survey, reaching out to academics, civil society and state officials across the

⁸⁶EUTF (2017) ‘Technical Cooperation Facility’, 13 May 2017, accessed 30 December 2020, https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/region/north-africa/regional/technical-cooperation-facility-tcf-formulation-programmes-implementation_en

⁸⁷EUTF ‘Research and Evidence Facility for the Sahel and Lake Chad Region and the North of Africa’, accessed 30 December 2020, https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/region/sahel-lake-chad/nigeria/research-and-evidence-facility-sahel-and-lake-chad-region-and-north_en

⁸⁸ICMPD (2020) ‘Award notice: Provision of services related to strengthening, expanding and extending rights-based migration governance systems in the North of Africa’, 30 March 2020, accessed 5 January 2021, https://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/ICMPD-Website/Procurement/Award_Notice_no_19.042_-_EmGPP_-_ONE_TO_ONE.pdf

region working on Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt.⁸⁹

The most important EUTF-funded regional project coordinated by ICMPD in terms of impact is the **‘Mediterranean City-to-City Migration’ (MC2CM)** program featuring a budget of EUR 6,375 Million for its second phase. It is co-funded by the EUTF (EUR 5,55 Million), Switzerland (EUR 550,000) and implementing partners (EUR 275,000) and was launched in the framework of the MTM. ICMPD even dubs it as MTM’s ‘flagship initiative’ that tackles the urban dimension of migration through capacity building, networking and informal dialogue.⁹⁰ MC2CM is implemented in collaboration with UN HABITAT, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, and involves multiple other partners such as GIZ and AFD. As ‘cities are becoming de facto managers of migration’, the project aims at creating a platform for cities in the Mediterranean ‘to share experiences, tools and methods to address common identified challenges such as: safeguarding social cohesion; ensuring access to basic services as well as to housing, education and employment for newcomers’, as outlined in a project file.⁹¹

⁸⁹One-to-One for Polling and Research (2020) Online survey website, ICMPD and eMGPP, accessed 5 January 2021,

https://121polling.fra1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0fh2ZFDqo4uduPH

⁹⁰ICMPD (2020) ‘Annual report 2019’, pp. 65

⁹¹EUTF (2020) ‘Action fiche Mediterranean-City-to-City-Migration (MC2CM) Phase II’

In the program's first phase (2015 – 2018), MC2CM addressed 13 cities, but has been enlarged to 21 for its second funding cycle. Besides Tunis, Sousse and Sfax, MC2CM involves today the cities of Tripoli, Tajoura, Rabat, Tangier, Casablanca, Oujda, Amman, Beirut, Vienna, Grenoble, Lyon, Lisbon, Madrid, Seville, Cadiz, Naples, Turin and Dortmund. In the project's framework, city migration profile reports and case studies about the participating cities have been published which partly include a mapping of NGOs and governmental stakeholders relevant for local and urban 'migration governance'.⁹² In Tunisia, MC2CM is closely collaborating with the municipality of Tunis since its first project cycle, featuring dialogue schemes to engage and exchange with civil society and authorities working on migration on a national and local level.

Currently, MC2CM's capacity building scheme contains of projects implemented in Sfax⁹³ and Tunis⁹⁴ by civil society organizations including Terre d'Asile Tunisie

⁹²ICMPD (2020) 'City-to-City (MC2CM)', accessed 30 December 2020, <https://www.icmpd.org/our-work/migration-dialogues/mtm-dialogue/city-to-city-mc2cm/>

⁹³Terre d'Asile Tunisie (2020) 'Améliorer la coordination de la migration par les acteurs locaux à Sfax', accessed 5 January 2021, <https://www.terre-asile-tunisie.org/index.php/terre-d-asile-tunisie/projets/ameliorer-la-coordination-de-la-migration-par-les-acteurs-locaux-a-sfax-acmals>

⁹⁴Terre d'Asile Tunisie (2020) 'Accroître la contribution positive des migrants au développement local de la ville en utilisant les arts pour renforcer leurs inclusion local', accessed 5 January 2021, <https://www.terre-asile-tunisie.org/index.php/terre-d-asile-tunisie/projets/accroitre-la-contribution-positive-des-migrants-au-developpement-local-de-la-ville-en-utilisant-les-arts-pour-renforcer-leur-inclusion-sociale-dans-le-developpement-local-de-la-ville-de-la-marsa>

(TAT), a subsidiary of the French NGO France Terre d'Asile. TAT collaborates with three municipalities in the city of Sfax and has set up a platform for meetings and dialogues between local officials, civil society and migrants, aimed at encouraging the latter's participation in decision-making processes on a local level, capacity building for local stakeholders and judicial and social assistance for vulnerable people. A second project, targeting the municipality of the upscale Tunis neighborhood of La Marsa, includes artistic activities, capacity building for local authorities and support for migrants. The budget for both projects amounts to EUR 60,000 and EUR 31,000 respectively.

Tunisia is additionally addressed by three EU projects jointly implemented by ICMPD and other partners, but funded outside of the EUTF framework. The **'High Opportunity for Mediterranean Executive Recruitment' (HOMERe)** project is an internship scheme, containing the set-up of a match-making platform for companies in search of young interns in the Mediterranean region and the reinforcement of links between academia and the private sector. The project targets students and young graduates from Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt and multiple universities, business schools and business federations. Due to Covid-19, all project activities regarding Tunisia were on hold in 2020, though the project is estimated to be revitalized in 2021.

Since 2009, the **‘Migration EU Expertise’ (MIEUX+)** project additionally targets Tunisia and, on an overall level, aims at ‘enhancing migration governance’ in more than 100 countries across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean by providing ‘European expertise in all areas of migration’ to relevant authorities.⁹⁵ The ICMPD-coordinated project was renewed for three more years in 2020 and is financed by the EU Commission (EUR 7 Million). In the project’s prior funding cycle (2016 – 2019, budget EUR 8 Million), EUR 120,000 had been earmarked for Tunisia. According to ICMPD, one workshop on project preparation, monitoring and evaluation has been organized for representatives of the ONM, the DGCIM, the INS and other Tunisian authorities and agencies in 2019.

Tunisia is likewise addressed by the **‘EUROMED Migration’ (EMM)** series, set up in 2004 and in its fifth project phase since December 2020 (EMM5).⁹⁶ Both EMM4 and EMM5 feature a budget of EUR 6,87 Million.⁹⁷ The series is funded by the EU through its ENI instrument, implemented by ICMPD and ‘tailors its

⁹⁵ICMPD (2020) ‘Project news: MIEUX releases publication to look back on ten years of successful capacity building activities’, 17 December 2020, accessed 5 January 2021, <https://www.icmpd.org/news-centre/news-detail/project-news-mieux-releases-publication-to-look-back-on-ten-years-of-successful-capacity-building-a/>

⁹⁶ICMPD (2020) ‘Project news: EUROMED Migration enters its fifth phase’, 11 December 2020, accessed 2 January 2021, <https://www.icmpd.org/news-centre/news-detail/project-news-euromed-migration-enters-its-fifth-phase/>

⁹⁷EU (2016) ‘EUROMED Migration IV’, accessed 5 January 2021, <https://www.eunighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/projects/euromed-migration-iv>

activities around facilitating effective North-South and South-South regional dialogues and cooperation’ on topics such as ‘legal migration, irregular migration, migration and development, international protection, migration governance and communication on migration.’⁹⁸ Regarding the latter, ICMPD implemented the Migration Media Award jointly with the Open Media Hub and in cooperation with EASO between 2017 and 2019.⁹⁹ Tunisia has been the host country for the 2018 award ceremony, while a communication workshop and a journalist training in Tunis have been additionally funded in the EMM4 framework. A forth and last edition of the Migration Media Award was scheduled for 2020, but has been canceled due to the Covid-19 crisis.

⁹⁸ICMPD (2020) ‘EUROMED Migration V’, accessed 30 December 2020, <https://www.icmpd.org/our-work/migration-dialogues/euromed-migration-v/>

⁹⁹Open Media Hub (2019) ‘Migration Media Award’ accessed 30 December 2020, <https://www.migration-media-award.eu/index.php/en/>

5

CONCLUSION AND OUTLOOK

“ All pieces of equipment the EU is currently delivering to Morocco via the two think tanks [ICMPD and FIIAPP, *Fundación Internacional y para Iberoamérica de Administración y Políticas Públicas*] are ‘dual-use’ goods: They can also be used for counter-insurgency.”

*Forschungsgesellschaft Flucht und Migration e.V.*¹⁰⁰

Upgrading maritime and land border control and surveillance capacities of Tunisian authorities by providing training and equipment; setting up a ‘systemised entry-exit data management’ by supporting border agencies in collecting data and centralizing counting procedures; capacity building; data collection; encouraging high-skilled labor migration and ‘migration governance’ projects featuring informal dialogues between state officials and civil society: ICMPD’s Tunisia operations are clearly in line with its overall agenda, mirroring practices and cooperation schemes it has already tested in countless other countries across Europe, Asia and Africa. Although some of the projects implemented by ICMPD in Tunisia are small-scale, the ICMPD nevertheless engages with countless Tunisian stakeholders on a local, regional and national level and gradually promotes terminologies and practices in line with the EU’s approach in the migration and border control sphere.

¹⁰⁰Forschungsgesellschaft Flucht und Migration e.V. (2019) ‘Think-Tanks liefern EU-Grenzaufüstungsmaterial an Marokko’, 23 December 2019, accessed 24 December 2020, <https://ffm-online.org/think-tanks-liefern-eu-grenzaufuestungsmaterial-an-marokko/>

Thereby, ICMPD is creating powerful incentives for Tunisian authorities and civil society to abide and harmonize respective practices in line with European standards, bypassing parliamentary and public control and undermining Tunisia's sovereignty on security and migration related matters.

Meanwhile, the scale of the procurement programs implemented by ICMPD in Tunisia, Morocco, Lebanon and Ghana indicate a shift of ICMPD's activities regarding its on-the-ground operations in non-European states, most notably in the Mediterranean. Turning the two training facilities, to be established in Nefta and Oued Zarga in Tunisia, into regional training centers, designed to create multiplying effects by providing training for security agencies of neighboring countries, could potentially serve as yet another blueprint project for ICMPD and, in case of a successful implementation, further boost the organization's fundraising ability and its on-the-ground impact in the entire region.

Germany's accession to ICMPD and its involvement in the IBM III project additionally indicates a possible further adjustment of its on-the-ground approach, given the history and scale of Germany's involvement in police training and procurement projects in the region. If IBM III succeeds, Germany could be encouraged to further outsource respective projects to external service providers and commission ICMPD and others for their

implementation. Since 2011, Germany has significantly and systematically expanded its security cooperation with Tunisia and provides extensive support for Tunisian border control agencies ever since. The German government was involved in refurbishing border posts at the Algerian-Tunisian border, supplying camera and radar equipment for an electronic surveillance system at the Libyan-Tunisian border,¹⁰¹ has signed a bilateral security agreement with Tunisia in 2017, facilitates training programs for Tunisian police and customs officials¹⁰² and, more recently, delivered equipment for a vessel workshop in Sfax for Tunisia's Garde Nationale Maritime.¹⁰³

Against this background, Tunisian authorities appear to be keen in enhancing their collaboration with ICMPD. But although ICMPD outspokenly advertises – in Tunisia and elsewhere – for ramping up opportunities for legal and labor migration to Europe, respective projects are stagnating as only high-skilled labor recruitment programs had been set up by relevant stakeholders so far. Training and procurement projects for the benefit of Tunisian law enforcement agencies, however, are

¹⁰¹Deutscher Bundestag (2018) 'Bundestagsdrucksache 19/6338', 7 December 2018, Berlin, parliamentary inquiry/reply, accessed 30 December 2020, <https://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/19/063/1906338.pdf>

¹⁰²Deutscher Bundestag (2017) 'Bundestagsdrucksache 18/11509', 13 March 2017, Berlin, law on German-Tunisian security agreement, accessed 30 December 2020, <https://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/18/115/1811509.pdf>

¹⁰³Deutscher Bundestag (2020) 'Bundestagsdrucksache 19/19467', 3 April 2020, Berlin, parliamentary inquiry/reply, accessed 30 December 2020, <http://dipbt.bundestag.de/doc/btd/19/194/1919467.pdf>, pp 45

consistently given priority, fueling a comprehensive harmonization of practices and policies in Tunisia in line with European border externalization schemes. At the same time, the volatile security setting at Tunisia's border to Libya is used as a pretext for the expansion of a restrictive multi-stakeholder border regime in Tunisia that aims at controlling and preventing the movement of people and goods. However, this policy massively affects the economic integration of the entire region and cuts off large strata of the population in Tunisia's borderlands of their income as non-regular trade, substituting the major income source for many, is systematically distorted.

Meanwhile, ICMPD's overall expansion has been gradually materialized between the early 2000s and 2015, but substantially accelerates since its current director Spindelegger took over in 2016. Under his leadership, ICMPD's staff almost doubled from less than 200 to almost 400 employees, its annual budget increased from EUR 20 Million to approximately EUR 60 Million in 2020 and the number of duty stations rose from 19 to 30.¹⁰⁴ As the former Austrian top diplomat was reappointed for a second term starting in January 2021, a further growth of ICMPD can be expected in the upcoming years. ICMPD is already a vital provider of services relevant for border externalization policies pursued by European states for


¹⁰⁴ICMPD (2020) 'ICMPD Director General Michael Spindelegger begins his 2nd term'



years. After its recent expansion, however, ICMPD turned into an omnipresent and vital player in the European and global ‘migration management’ industry and will most likely continue to significantly increase its political impact – in Tunisia, North Africa and beyond.



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