

International Organization for Migration (IOM)
International Partnerships Division (IPD)
Assessment of Inter-State Consultation Mechanisms on Migration

Summary of Findings per ISCM

As part of an assessment of inter-state consultation mechanisms on migration (ISCMs), a survey was conducted in 2019. Carried out by IOM among ISCMs, their Member States and relevant inter-governmental organizations, the survey aimed to assess ISCMs' continued relevance and contribution to migration governance at all levels (national, regional and international) and the synergies among ISCMs and with other actors. The findings of this survey were presented at the global gathering of ISCMs in 2019 and were used to develop recommendations to enhance ISCMs' engagement in migration governance.

46 States and 22 ISCMs and 3 inter-governmental organizations provided answers to the questionnaires. The results are to be found in the 2019 assessment report: Advancing a common understanding of migration governance among regions, which provides an overview on ISCMs' organization, engagements, their continued relevance and synergies with relevant actors in the area of migration management. In addition to the report, the information below is meant to outline each individual ISCM's thematic priorities, structure, impact and relevance.

Name of the Inter-state consultation mechanism (ISCM): ***Inter-governmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees (IGC)***

1. Evolution of programing and thematic focus

Through its 30 years of existence IGC's thematic foci have undergone various transformations. The most significant changes occurred in 2004-2005, after a strategic review of the IGC. Following this revision, the IGC applied a more comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach. At the same time, thematic areas are adjusted quite frequently and include: Asylum/refugees; Country of origin information; Technology; Immigration (legal migration); Settlement, Integration and Citizenship; Admission, Control and Enforcement (return/readmission, smuggling, trafficking, border management); Data; International Engagement on Migration; Migration Management: transversal issues and multi-disciplinary themes; Country specific approaches (multi-disciplinary).

The IGC strategy is based on its 2005-2006 strategic review and was additionally reviewed in 2014. The IGC Work Plan, adopted every semester, identifies activities and projects. It is implemented by the Secretariat, in consultation with Member States. Senior Officials with the support of IOM monitor the work plan.

2. Contribution to migration governance at national, (inter)regional and global levels (with examples)

National: The IGC has facilitated the development of common practices in its Member States, particularly in the field of asylum. Furthermore, even though it does not officially

pursue this objective it facilitated cooperation between Member States and has led to an approximation of policies and practices over time, most notably in the areas of asylum, technology, legal migration, and to a lesser extent return and readmission. IGC's Member States acknowledge the ISCM's contribution their migration governance – this is seen in Member States officially requesting information from the ISCM in key court cases or legislative processes, development of IT systems on immigration and international migration processes or initiatives.

Regional: While the IGC has not developed regional policies, it has contributed to the development of solutions in response to the regional crisis in Kosovo¹.

Global: IGC has contributed to global migration governance, namely by providing recommendations to the Global Commission on Migration in 2005 and the UN High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development in 2013. IGC's contribution to migration governance on a global level was acknowledged by senior officials by providing feedback.

3. Salient ISCM structures

Since IGC's restructuring in 2005-2006, the ISCM is governed by its operating modalities. They set out the following structure: a Chair; a Chairmanship Troika; a Steering Committee; a technical Secretariat (platform for information exchange; manages knowledge, data, and networks of experts; initiates projects and innovation; in charge of liaison and coordination, advocacy and outreach; gives substantive/technical advice and support to states) and working groups. IOM acts as legal personality of the process. IGC's communication is performed through meetings, networks of experts, sharing of reports, news and information queries on the IGC secure website and by e-mail. One of the main functions of IGC is knowledge management, more specifically to facilitate an informal exchange of information and best practices for its Member States. In order to meet these objectives, IGC produces news, reports and summaries, maintains a secure website and a database and stores information. Since its establishment, the ISCMs constituency, comprising of traditional destination countries has changed. France, Austria and Italy have left the process, while representatives of new geographical areas have joined, for instances from Central and Eastern Europe. Also, some Observer States have become IGC Members, as was the case for New Zealand, Ireland and Greece. IGC's funding is stable and comprises mainly of an annual fee of CHF 120,000 per country. Additionally, IGC receives funding through in-kind contributions, donations by Member States and, as a minor source of income, publications. The Secretariat is financed through the general budget, while government and organization representatives must cover their own travel costs to participate in IGC meetings.

4. Partnership models by the ISCM

IGC has cooperated with other **ISCMs**, such as the Budapest Process, RCM and the now dormant APC. Currently, IGC works in partnership with the Bali Process. **IGOs** are regularly participating in RCM activities, such as OECD, ILO, Council of Europe and IATA. Others, for instance ICMPD, World Bank, UNODC, UNICEF, Interpol, IOE participate on an occasional basis. IOM and UNHCR are officially and historically associated to IGC, but not with a full

¹ References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

member status and the benefits attached. Regarding **regional political and economic unions**, IGC works closely with the EU, EU agencies (EASO, Frontex/EBCG, Europol, EU Lisa) and networks (EMN, GDISC). While there is neither a formal cooperation mechanism with **civil society** nor with the **private sector**, the IGC associated relevant entities to their program of work. Recent examples from the civil society include ICMC, ICVA, Human Rights Watch, Detention Watch and Refuge Point. Private sector entities frequently associated are Adecco, Fragomen Switzerland, WEF Global Council on Migration, Society for Human Resource Management and Seefar. IGC also cooperates closely with **academia**, in the form of an internship program.

5. Added value of Membership in the given ISCM for States and Organizations (with examples)

IGC provides a forum for discussions on new emerging issues, trust-building, networking and access to stakeholders (such as the private sector). It supports its Members with capacity building, technical advice and guidance, such as traditional immigration countries' expertise being transferred to some European countries. It maintains continuity in examining migration issues and circulates knowledge of best practices and failures. Members benefit from the IGC's multidisciplinary focus and possibilities to feed into global initiatives addressing migration (e.g. contribution to UN HLD on migration and development 2013, preparations of GFMD and GC discussions).

Five of the Member States surveyed (Canada, Poland, Norway, the Netherlands and Spain) referred to IGC in their questionnaires. Canada values their Membership in the IGC working group. The informal nature of this working group provides opportunities for cooperation, information sharing, access to key partners in migration governance, network building, dialogue on emerging issues. In addition, the IGC has helped to inform, shape or direct policy direction in Canada and the country has established strong relationships with IGC Member States. Poland benefits from an exchange of best practices and experiences and possibilities to better understand migration position of other IGC Member States, particularly in the EU. For Norway the IGC is an important platform and meeting point to facilitate constructive dialogues for European governments. One initiative emerging from these meetings were study visits on specific topics in IGC Member States. The Netherlands and Norway see the importance of the IGC in meeting likeminded States which have a similar approach to migration.