

# : Programme

As at 14/11/2023

## **sef: Policy Lunch**

### **Migration Partnerships – Outsourcing of a European Controversy or Chance for a Just Cooperation with Third Countries?**

**16 November 2023**

**12.00 hrs – 13.45 hrs (CET)**

Representation of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia to the EU  
Rue Montoyer 47, Brussels

**Conference language:** English

#### **Supported by**

The State Government of  
North Rhine-Westphalia



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## BACKGROUND

The number of refugees and migrants to the EU has increased significantly in recent months. It is to be expected that this number will continue to rise due to a continuously high number of violent conflicts in many parts of the world and accelerating effects of climate change. At the same time, Germany and other EU member states have an increased need for a regulated immigration due to labour shortages in many economic sectors.

Since the arrival of an unprecedented number of refugees in 2015, the EU has been striving to adapt its asylum and migration legislation. The latest agreement of the interior and justice ministers of the EU in June 2023 has prompted highly diverse reactions: some commended it a milestone for European asylum and migration policy, others, particularly from civil society, call the agreement “misanthropic”. While proponents argue that the agreement will create legal certainty, enhancing the prospects of acceptance into the EU for those genuinely in need. Conversely, critics argue that the EU’s measures are progressively shifting towards compartmentalisation and deterrence, with humanitarian considerations increasingly relegated to the sidelines.

In the course of the discussions, the EU and its member states are also paying renewed attention to the external dimension of their migration policies, which comprises a toolbox of policy measures, legal instruments, and financial incentives for cooperation with third countries on the management of migration, borders, and asylum. These measures emphasize the growing tendency within the EU to prevent migration overseas before migrants reach EU borders and thereby to “outsource” the migration problem. One of those measures is the aspiration of EU and its member states to expand its “targeted migration partnerships” with third countries, as also laid out in Germany’s National Security Strategy published in June 2023. The EU has already signed an agreement with Tunisia, which evoked severe criticism from various civil society groups who accuse the EU of conducting a dirty deal with an autocratic regime and disregarding its human rights obligations. Nevertheless, the EU plans to also develop agreements with further countries.

In this Policy Lunch, we would like to discuss with our panellists whether migration partnerships, be it bilaterally or at EU level, have the potential to contribute to just asylum and refugee policies of the EU. How must such partnerships be designed to fulfill Europe’s aspiration to regulate immigration more tightly, while simultaneously guaranteeing the protection and humane treatment of migrants and refugees?

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**12.00 HRS      REGISTRATION AND LIGHT LUNCH**

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**12.30 HRS      WELCOME**

**Rainer Steffens**

Director, Representation of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia to the EU, Brussels

**Dr Marcus Kaplan**

Executive Director

Development and Peace Foundation (sef:), Bonn

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**12.40 HRS      ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION**

**Dr Georgia Papagianni**

MENA Regional and Horizontal Affairs Coordinator  
European External Action Service, Brussels

**Camille Le Coz**

Associate Director

Migration Policy Institute Europe (MPI), Brussels

**Dr Tamirace Fakhoury**

Associate Professor

Department of Politics and Society

Aalborg University, Copenhagen

**Chair**

**Dr Zeynep Şahin-Mencütek**

Senior Researcher, Bonn International Centre for Conflict Studies (BICC), Bonn

Followed by      Discussion with the audience

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**13.45 HRS      END OF EVENT**