Towards a common EU policy on Migration and Refugees

More than a million refugees and migrants fled to Europe by sea in 2015 and 2016. 2016 was the deadliest year ever with more than 5000 deaths at sea, and more people are displaced from their homes than ever before. The Russian involvement in the crisis in Syria and the recent attacks on Aleppo predict that more refugees are on the move right now, adding to the 8 million internally displaced Syrians, the 4 million Syrians currently seeking refuge in Syria’s neighbouring countries, and 3.9 million people who are internally displaced in Iraq.

In addition to the human tragedies underlying these numbers, the crisis challenges the ideals and values on which European society is built, particularly the human rights safeguards. It has called into question our ability to protect the EU’s borders, to make joint decisions in crisis response, and has raised issues about our status as a humanitarian super power. At the EU Member State level, the flow of refugees and migrants has also challenged the organised labour market models and has raised questions about the social contracts and long-term financial viability of universal welfare states.

Managing the crisis has prompted the strengthening of the Frontex border management system, new asylum processes in Eastern European countries, and scaled-up the protection against domestic and international violent extremism. The current crisis has, however, demonstrated that strong differences exist among EU Member States in terms of the will to provide humanitarian protection and access to asylum procedures, and regarding which costs and benefits the inflow of immigrants from North Africa and the Middle East (MENA) will have on European society and its labour markets and welfare systems in the medium to long-term. The refugee and migration crisis has also had a direct impact on the support for the EU within different member states and could be a decisive factor in upcoming elections in several European countries this year. Addressing the issue of having a forward-looking vision of how the EU should develop its approaches to migrants and refugees is thus of the utmost importance.

The Danish Foreign Policy Society in cooperation with the Austrian Embassy in Denmark and the Labour Union 3F would like to shed light on the different EU migration and refugee issues at a seminar to be held on the 21st of March 2017.
Program:

Venue: 3F, Kampmannsgade 4, Conference hall
Moderator: Charlotte Flindt Pedersen, director of the Foreign Policy Society
Time: 21st of March from 14.00 to 16.30

14:00 Welcome by Anthony Sylvester, 3F
14:05 Keynote: Dr. Michael Spindelegger, Director General, ICMPD
   – A durable and future oriented policy for EU Immigration and Integration

Panel
14:30 Morten Kjærum, Director of the Raul Wallenberg Institute
   – The Human Rights Implications of EU policies
14:55 Marlene Wind, Ph.d, Professor at Centre for European Politics
   – The effects of migration question on the EU cooperation and unity

15:15-15:30 Coffee break

15:30 Susanne Knasmüller, Head of Department “Integration Coordination” at Federal Ministry of Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs of Austria
   – Austrian initiatives in the field of integration over the last year
15:45 Ninna Nyberg Sørensen, Senior researcher at Danish Institute of The human security implications of EU policies
16:10 Debate and questions from the audience
16:30 Austrian Ambassador to Denmark Ernst-Peter Brezovsky
   – Closing remarks