



WSF speaks out on The Global Compact on Migration: Controversy and Media

On the evening of Thursday April 25th, Lina Vosyliute, research fellow at CEPS, Colombe Cahen-Salvador, Co-founder and policy lead at Volt Europa, and Mr Ali Raza Syed, chairman of the Kashmir council to the EU, joined the World Solidarity Forum (WSF) at the Press Club in Brussels to discuss the Global Compact on Migration: controversies and media.

May 2nd, 2019

On Thursday April 25th, 2019, the Brussels Press Club hosted the World Solidarity Forum (WSF) for an event 'The Global Compact for Migration: Controversy and Media'. For this event the WSF brought together speakers from a variety of backgrounds to comment on this important issue.

The event was skillfully moderated by WSF contributor Fatlum Gashi, a noted researcher on the issues of migration and politics with a master's degree in Migration Studies from the University of Oxford. In the prelude to the main discussion, Mr. Gashi highlighted a few key points about the [Global Compact on Migration](#) (GCM) that was finalized at an event in Marrakesh last December.

Leading up to the Marrakesh conference, politicians, lobbyists and media outlets began asking questions about the legal implications of this non-binding agreement, and debated whether or not it infringes on national sovereignty. Mr. Gashi posed specific questions to the invited experts, especially on how these issues highlighted above affect the reception and subsequent reaction of the GCM.

The first expert to contribute to the discussion was Lina Vosayliute, a research fellow at CEPS, who has recently published an article titled "[Some EU governments leaving the UN Global Compact on Migration: a contradiction in terms?](#)". Ms. Vosayliute highlighted that there were, in fact, two documents being debated, the first being the UN's GCM and the second referring specifically to refugee and asylum practices - the [Global Compact on Refugees](#) (CGR). She further stated that these two main objective were to change how we speak about and understand migration. But the issues that opponents of these compacts took with the documents were not founded. Questions of sovereignty, national interest, and security threats would not have been brought forth "if they had read it" asserted Ms. Vosyliute. In her view, the GCM and GCR simply reaffirm what have become long standing norms of migration policy around the world.

Ms. Colombe Cahen-Salvador, co-founder and policy leader for Volt Europa went on to add to the insights shared by Ms. Vosayliute. Ms. Cahen-Salvador began with a discussion of what Volt is, and why she feels it is exactly what Europe needs at this time. Volt is a European party first, not a collections of various member states, focused on building cohesion and promoting cross border collaborations. To Ms. Cahen-Salvador, the ways migration can benefit host communities are clear. It has been shown that when managed well, migration can help to revitalize communities that, up to now, have been suffering from brain-drain type movement of young people to urban centres or other countries. There needs to be a shift in government priorities from faster and more efficient return practices, to enhanced access to the labour market and other forms of inclusion into host communities.

Mr. Ali Raza Syed, the Chairman of the Kashmir council to the EU, spoke of the great need in the world for better asylum systems. In his region of Kashmir, people have been living with the ramifications of forced displacement for over 70 years. The challenges facing the world means that issues like the management of asylum seekers must be addressed globally. 'Why can the liberalization of labour markets not be as beneficial as the liberal economic exchange?'

The event closed with a passionate Q&A session. The main themes of the debates were on how public discourses affect newcomers integration experiences, with examples being cited in France, Italy and Germany, Dresden in particular. Then the conversation moved to explore if the CGM, a non-binding agreement designed to help improve the way migrants are handled in the discourse has been a failure. This question was passed around the room a few times with no strong conclusion met in the end. But what was clear by the end of the event is that there is still no clear way forward through the challenges being posed by modern media, communication and global politics. There is still a long way to go before an effective global migration management solution can be found.

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