

MP Open Call: Your Direct Line to Europe's Policymakers #1

Mercator European Dialogue

1 October 2020

On 1 October 2020, the MED hosted its first MP Open Call. This new call series invites members of the network to join regular informal open-agenda conversations with their peers. The participants decide what they want to talk about and how they want to use the one hour on the line together, spontaneously.

On this first MP open call of the MED's fall event series, policymakers from Germany, Austria, and Lithuania discussed the EU refugee policy and the state of Covid-19 responses in their countries. A longer readout of the call can be found [on our website](#).

Highlights of the Conversation

The participants identified two main topics of shared interest:

- **Refugees and Migration:** how to react to the crisis in Moria and other refugee camps?
 - o Multilevel governance of migration: policy preferences of decision-makers are shaped by their level of government rather than their political camp. Municipalities offer help to accommodate asylum seekers, national governments prefer a coordinated EU-wide response and block these offers
 - o German Council Presidency: EU asylum policy reform high on the agenda but receives little attention nationally and internationally. More public focus on Merkel's succession or the governments' handling of the Covid-19 crisis
- **National Covid-19 measures:** what is working?
 - o Differences between how seriously populations and even party groups in parliament take the virus
 - o Protests against Covid-19 measures are currently more visible and wide-spread in Germany than in Austria
 - o The effects of travel restrictions are expected to have a devastating effect on the tourism industry and are even provoking some tensions between German and Austria policymakers in the border regions
 - o New "mouthwash" tests introduced in Vienna to avoid using swabs, particularly on little children

Resources and further information

- Vienna switches testing strategy to mouthwash tests delivered by bike: [Der Standard](#) (in German)
- [Program of the German Council Presidency 2020](#)

Keep in contact! Please know you can find contact details of all MED members on the Members-only area of the website, which is accessible here: www.mercatoreuropeandialogue.org/login/

Should you have issues logging in, you can contact rschalast@gmfus.org.