

Session 4

Background note



The fourth session of the Regional Review for the members of the United Nations Regional Commission for the Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) will offer space for discussion of progress made in accomplishing objectives 1, 3, 7, 17, and 23 of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM)¹.

This background note provides examples of progress and challenges in regional, sub-regional and intra-regional collaboration towards the implementation of the GCM by the UNECE Member States drawn from inputs from the Regional Network on Migration; voluntary GCM reports submitted to the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF)²; the IMRF Progress Declaration³; consultations with stakeholders; and information available on the Migration Network Hub.⁴

Introduction

In recent years, the UNECE region witnessed a notable rise in regular migration, driven by factors such as job opportunities, family reunification and educational programs. In 2020, the UNECE region hosted nearly 159 million international migrants⁵, a significant increase from 2015. Despite efforts to enhance the availability of regular pathways, irregular migration remains a challenge, due to geopolitical events and economic disparities; there were roughly 288,000 arrivals via the Mediterranean in 2023.⁶

The absence of harmonized migration data definitions and statistics poses a fundamental obstacle to effective policymaking and regional cooperation. Varying methodologies across the region impede accurate comparisons and obscure trends, highlighting the urgent need for standardized data collection and reporting mechanisms. Addressing these challenges is crucial to foster evidence-based policies and enhance coordination among European states in managing contemporary migration dynamics. The availability of accurate, reliable and timely data, disaggregated by sex, age, migration status, disability, etc., is key to the development of effective policies and programmes that are rooted in evidence and sensitive to the needs of different demographic groups, including children, women, persons with disabilities, and others.

¹ [Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration \(A/RES/73/195\)](#)

² [Voluntary National Review Reports](#)

³ [IMRF Progress Declaration \(A/RES/76/266\)](#)

⁴ <https://migrationnetwork.un.org/migration-network-hub>

⁵ [International Migrant Stock | Population Division \(un.org\)](#)

⁶ International Organization for Migration: [South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia Region On the Move](#), 2023.

International Organization for Migration: [World Migration Report, 2022](#)

World Bank: [World Development Report: Migrants, Refugees and Societies](#), 2023

Overview of progress

Member States recognized through the Progress Declaration, that evidence-based policies are a powerful way to foster an informed public debate that counters the misleading narratives that generate negative perceptions of migrants.⁷ Given that data lays the groundwork for the implementation of all the other GCM objectives and guiding principles, it is natural that GCM positioned data is the very first objective.

In the UNECE region, there have been notable improvements in the collection and use of disaggregated migration data, the initiation of awareness-raising campaigns, and efforts to reduce the vulnerabilities of migrants.⁸ The lack of adequate evidence perpetuates harmful migration narratives, discrimination and xenophobia, and policies and practices that make migration unsafe, disorderly and irregular. Concrete examples from the region serve to reaffirm the unity of Member States and stakeholders in condemning acts of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance towards migrants and diasporas including negative stereotypes based on religion or belief.

For example, in North Macedonia, a Joint Programme funded by the Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund (M-MPTF)⁹ supported the government and its partners to design evidence-based and coordinated migration policies and raised awareness among the public to prevent xenophobia and stigmatization of migrants and refugees. Additionally, it has supported the development and application of seven new tools to improve the migration database.¹⁰ Another M-MPTF funded Joint Programme addressed migration data needs in Serbia and strengthened policy capacities at both national and local levels by focusing on challenges and opportunities relevant to local communities.¹¹ Other examples on strengthening capacities for evidence-based policymaking include the UK Government's Pledge¹² to make more accurate and reliable data about migration publicly available; the Prague Process Migration Observatory¹³; and the International Data Alliance for Children on the Move (IDAC)¹⁴ bringing together governments and a plethora of international and regional organizations, civil society, academia and youth. Another local level example is the establishment of the Africa-Europe Mayors' Dialogue with the support and commitment of the Mayors Mechanism¹⁵, serving as platform for twenty African and European mayors to change the dominant narrative of migration between Africa and Europe, while focusing on the opportunities that connect cultures and people. Nevertheless, further efforts are required to establish standard procedures for data analysis and dissemination, which should involve the active participation of relevant stakeholders such as private sector and media actors who play a significant role shaping public perceptions and opinion. In this regard, the UN Secretary-General will propose, in his third biennial report a comprehensive strategy to improve the availability of disaggregated migration data at the local, national, regional and global levels.

Member States and stakeholders at that IMRF emphasized the critical need for the provision of accurate information in multiple languages and the need to ensure accessibility to all migrants in a non-discriminatory manner, independent of immigration enforcement. Likewise, they recognized the significant supportive contributions made by civil society and national Human Rights institutions in this regard. There

⁷ IMRF Progress Declaration, paragraph 53

⁸ IMRF Progress Declaration, paragraph 45

⁹ [M-MPTF Pipeline](#), page 89

¹⁰ <https://migrationnetwork.un.org/fund-action-north-macedonia>

¹¹ [M-MPTF Pipeline](#), page 91

¹² <https://migrationnetwork.un.org/pledge/improving-publicly-available-data>

¹³ <https://www.pragueprocess.eu/en/migration-observatory>

¹⁴ <https://data.unicef.org/resources/international-data-alliance-for-children-on-the-move/#:~:text=The%20International%20Data%20Alliance%20for%20Children%20on%20the,organizations%2C%20NGOs%2C%20think%20tanks%2C%20academics%2C%20and%20civil%20society.>

¹⁵ <https://migrationnetwork.un.org/pledge/africa-europe-mayors-dialogue-milan-freetown-partnership-fashion-and-textile-industries>

is a need for national and regional coordination to create efficient systems to collect, verify and disseminate information to migrants in a timely manner, at all stages of their migration journeys. To this end, Germany, Portugal¹⁶ and Sweden¹⁷ have established support centres serving as 'one-stop shops' offering migrants free access to various governmental services. Furthermore, Belgium has launched the Reach Out team, a mobile, multilingual initiative designed to approach migrants without residence permits, including transit migrants and those in irregular or vulnerable situations.

Situations of vulnerability in the context of migration are often the result of policies and practices that fail to protect migrant's human rights, including the lack of child-sensitive and gender-responsive approaches. Collaboration between governmental and non-governmental actors to ensure migrant protection is critical. In this regard, the M-MPTF funded Joint Programme in Tajikistan focused on the well-being of vulnerable "families left behind", by enhancing their economic resilience and upholding their rights, through an approach combining top-down protection and policy initiatives with bottom-up empowerment interventions.¹⁸ A COVID-19 MPTF-funded Project in Kazakhstan focused on accelerating digital social services delivery to address the needs of the most vulnerable, mitigating the effects of socio-economic shocks and upholding the "leaving no one behind" principle.¹⁹

The 2020 GCM Regional Review and the IMRF in 2022 recognized the need for enhanced cooperation regionally and globally to address the challenges and gaps that persist in the implementation of the GCM and the inadequate coordination within and between governments and other relevant stakeholders. Cooperation is essential to foster evidence-based policymaking, to reduce vulnerabilities in the context of migration, and to promote safe, orderly and regular migration – aims central to the GCM. Through the Progress Declaration,²⁰ Member States made concrete commitments to address these challenges, enhance international cooperation and reinforce their efforts to expedite the realization of the 2030 Agenda, including the Sustainable Development Goals, through a revitalized Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

Concrete examples of strengthened collaboration include the European Union – United Nations Partnership to Migration Capacity Building,²¹ which seeks to bolster the capacity of the UN System to support GCM implementation; Azerbaijan's Regional Training Center on Migration²² that serves as a training knowledge management Hub across the sub-region; and the M-MPTF Joint Programme proposal on the creation of a Common Regional Market in the Western Balkans to foster regional mobility²³. Furthermore, Inter-state Consultation Mechanisms such as the Budapest Process²⁴ and Almaty Process²⁵ remain important platforms to promote sub-regional dialogue on coherent, integrated and differentiated policies and practices for people on the move. In the spirit of the GCM whole-of-society approach, engaging and empowering relevant stakeholders, including representatives from the migrant and diaspora organizations, civil society, trade unions, private sector, etc., is key to ensure genuine and meaningful partnerships to advance its implementation.

¹⁶ <https://migrationnetwork.un.org/practice/migration-counselling-adult-immigrants-mbe>; <https://migrationnetwork.un.org/practice/expansion-national-support-network-integration-migrants>;

¹⁷ https://connection.integratingcities.eu/good_practices/OSS/Stockholm_Civic_Office_Ragsverd.pdf

¹⁸ <https://migrationnetwork.un.org/fund-action-tajikistan>

¹⁹ <https://mptf.undp.org/project/00129533>

²⁰ IMRF Progress Declaration, paragraph 45

²¹ <https://migrationnetwork.un.org/building-migration-partnerships>

²² <https://rtcm.az/>

²³ [M-MPTF Pipeline](#), page 63

²⁴ <https://www.budapestprocess.org/>

²⁵ <https://www.iom.int/almaty-process-refugee-protection-and-international-migration>

Guiding questions

1. Has your government developed a GCM national implementation plan or integrated the GCM and its guiding principles into existing frameworks, plans and policies? If so, please elaborate on the process. If not, please indicate if your government has plans to do so, and what the envisaged process is.
2. How has or will your government integrate the recommended actions to accelerate the implementation of the GCM as set out in the IMRF 2022 Progress Declaration into their relevant national policies and plans and reflected in their engagements in relevant international fora (e.g. High-Level Political Forum, Regional Forum for Sustainable Development, COP Climate Change Conference, etc.)? Furthermore, please indicate how the whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches were implemented and/or advanced in this regard.
3. Please list some examples of achievements, promising practices and lessons learned that relate to national, inter- and sub-regional collaboration to the implementation of the GCM.
4. What are the main gaps and challenges to existing inter- and cross-regional collaboration on the implementation of the GCM?
5. Outline areas (GCM objectives and/or guiding principles) where the region would benefit from strengthened cooperation in terms of finance, capacity-building, policy advice, data gathering and analysis, technology, multi-stakeholder partnerships, etc.

Session agenda

Session 4: 16:15 – 17:30 CET	
Introductory remarks (5 mins) Member State speaker	Askarbek Yertayev , Chairperson of the Migration Committee of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Kazakhstan
Interactive discussion (70 mins) moderated by Stakeholder representative.	Michele LeVoy , Director of the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM)