

Contribution by the EEAS / European Commission Services to the Regional Review of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in the UNECE Region (12-13 November 2020)

- The global challenges we face in today's world require **effective multilateral approaches**, based on solidarity, human rights and a rules-based international order. **Building strong partnerships** with countries of origin, transit and destination and working towards a **comprehensive and balanced framework for engagement with partners** to address migration is a key element of the European Union's migration policy.
- In line with the European Union's *acquis* and established policy, the 2015 European Agenda on Migration, the 2016 Partnership Framework, and the 2017 European Consensus on Development, the work of the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the services of the European Commission has been contributing to the implementation of the objectives of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM). This **comprehensive approach** led to support for actions in and outside Europe to: (i) protect the human rights of all migrants with particular attention to children and the most vulnerable groups; (ii) promote legal pathways to migration while tackling irregular migration; (iii) address the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement; (iv) improve the development impact of migration.
- In line with the guiding principles of the GCM, the European Commission Services and the European External Action Service (EEAS) have been engaged in building genuine and **tailor-made partnerships, to support partner countries** to strengthen their capacities in the area of migration. **Bilateral, regional and multilateral dialogues** have intensified and encompass issues such as saving lives at sea, protecting the human rights of migrants, developing evidence-based migration governance systems, tackling migrant smuggling and human trafficking, enhancing border management, visa facilitation, promoting legal and circular migration and mobility, return, readmission and sustainable reintegration, as well as addressing the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement.
- In particular, partnership with African countries is being further strengthened, building also on the implementation of actions under the five pillars of the **Joint Valletta Action Plan** (2015), co-operation within the **Khartoum and Rabat processes**, and in the context of the cooperation with the **African Union** on migration. Migration and mobility are also part of the new 2020 EU Communication "Towards a Comprehensive Strategy with Africa" and of the next cycle of EU-ACP relations.
- A number of African countries are partners in the first **legal migration pilot projects** managed by EU Member States and supported by the European Commission. Work in the area of integration of third-country nationals, notably in the labour market, has continued.
- The **EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF)**, with over EUR 5 billion, allows to work faster and with more flexibility jointly with African partners in the Sahel and Lake Chad, the Horn of Africa and in the North of Africa regions. So far, 254 actions consisting of 676 individual projects have been implemented under the EUTF. Specifically in North Africa, EUR 888 million have been committed for four strands of action: i) support to improved migration governance; ii) support to labour migration and mobility; iii) protection of vulnerable migrants, voluntary return and sustainable reintegration, as well as community stabilisation (including through support to municipalities along migration routes; iv) integrated border management.

- Another example is the **EU-Turkey Statement**, which has produced tangible results leading to a significant decrease of loss of human lives and a reduction of life-threatening irregular crossings from Turkey to the EU. It further encompasses the agreement on voluntary returns of irregular migrants from the Greek islands to Turkey in full compliance with EU and international laws, including the principle of *non-refoulement*.
- A close, strategic partnership has been put in place with UN agencies in the context of the **trilateral African Union-European Union-United Nations (AU-EU-UN) Task Force** to address the situation of migrants and refugees stranded in Libya. Thanks to the work of the Task Force and with support of the Trust Fund, around 53,000 voluntary humanitarian returns have taken place since 2017; assistance is being provided at disembarkation points, at detention centres when access is possible, and to support host communities, as well as promoting alternatives to detention.
- The **EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration** has been designed to provide a coherent framework to save lives, protect and assist migrants along the Central Mediterranean Route. The Initiative contributed to assist more than 85,435 migrants to return to their country of origin, mainly from Libya (32,996); and more than 98,570 migrants were assisted after their return, of which more than 66,000 have engaged in reintegration support in their country of origin.
- New projects have started in partner countries and regions, **tackling migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings**, such as the UNODC-led regional programmes in North Africa, Asia and the Middle East. New information and awareness campaigns highlight the risks of irregular migration and migrant smuggling in countries of origin and transit. In the Silk Route region, comprehensive engagement was carried forward, including within the Budapest Process and with support of a dedicated project..
- The **EU has also been at the forefront of the response to the Venezuelan migration crisis**. Since 2018, the EU had mobilised around EUR 319 million in humanitarian and development aid inside and outside Venezuela, including support to Venezuelan migrants and host communities in neighbouring countries. On 26 May 2020, the virtual International Donors Conference in Solidarity with Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants in the Countries of the Region raised more than € 2.53 billion, including 144.2 million in grants from EU funds and € 400 million in loans from the European Investment Bank.
- In striving to enhance the development outcomes of migration, the EU has supported **regional and national efforts** in the ASEAN region to promote fair recruitment and decent work with ILO and UNWOMEN. Through the EU Global Diaspora Facility, it contributes to facilitate engagement and cooperation between countries of origin and their diaspora.
- The EU aims to **mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on migration**, including on migrants themselves, as part of its internal and external responses to the pandemic. In that context, the EU is committed to international cooperation and multilateral solutions, and rallies behind the UN Secretary General's efforts to coordinate a UN-wide response. On 16 April, the European Commission released guidance on the implementation of EU rules in the area of return procedures, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of the EU's global response, amounting to € 37 billion and implemented through the Team Europe approach, the EU focuses on already vulnerable populations such as migrants and their host communities.

- Building on this comprehensive approach and the activities outlined, **on 23 September 2020 the European Commission published a New Pact on Migration and Asylum**, as a “fresh start” on migration for the EU. Discussions on the proposed Pact with EU Member States in the Council and in the European Parliament were launched.
- The proposed Pact addresses both the internal and external dimension of the EU’s migration policy. The Pact aims at establishing a predictable and reliable asylum and migration system in the European Union, with faster procedures, balancing the principles of **fair sharing of responsibility and solidarity among EU Member States**.
- Externally, the new Pact proposes to consolidate and reinforce cooperation with third countries, based on the approach of tailor-made and mutually beneficial **partnerships with countries and regions, as well as in international organisations and at multilateral level, and ensuring** ownership on all sides of all dimensions of our cooperation on migration. The aim is to ensure that migration takes place in a **safe and regular manner**, avoiding loss of life and **providing international protection** to those who need it. When it comes to migration and forced displacement, every country has its own situation, its own concerns, and its own opportunities: there is no “one size fits all”, this is why **a tailor-made approach is needed**.
- **Helping countries hosting large numbers of refugees and displaced people** will continue to be a priority. Providing protection to those in need and enabling a life in dignity are deeply rooted in the European values. Refugee hosting countries are expected to provide protection, access to basic services and increasingly access to the employment market, and the EU has been supporting partner countries in this direction.
- At the same time, efforts are not limited to supporting countries in hosting refugees, but also concentrate on facilitating **resettlement to Europe**. Recent years have already seen a major increase in resettlement to the EU, and this work should be further scaled up. The Commission **Recommendation on legal pathways to protection in the EU** shows the commitment to continue to offer safe and legal pathways to people in need of protection. It calls on EU Member States to continue resettlement efforts in the years to come and to promote other complementary pathways to protection. In addition, it foresees supporting EU Member States to establish community or private sponsorships.
- **Building economic opportunities and addressing root causes of irregular migration** will also continue to be a priority. The EU is the world’s largest provider of development assistance, and this will remain a key feature in its engagement with partners. Work to build strong and cohesive societies, create economic opportunity, sustainable investment and jobs can help people feel that their future lies at home. Investment-boosting instruments, such as the EU’s External Investment Plan, can have a significant contribution to the creation of job opportunities, including for the youth. And many other policies can be harnessed to help build stability and prosperity in partner countries
- Against this context, the Commission proposed for the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument under the next Multiannual Financial Framework, that 10% of the main future development funding instrument be dedicated to addressing all aspects of migration in a comprehensive way.
- **Supporting our partners in developing effective migration management capacity and governance is an example of the mutually beneficial partnerships** we seek to develop. The EU stands ready to help with expertise and capacity building. **Depending on the**

specific situation and needs of a third country, the support can include capacity building of the border and coast guards, including strengthening search and rescue capacities, support in the elaboration of national migration and asylum legislation and strategies, creating asylum and reception capacities, protecting migrants' rights by combatting discrimination and labour exploitation, or stepping up the fight against migrant smuggling. For example, we aim at setting up targeted **counter migrant smuggling** partnerships, which will support countries of origin and transit in capacity-building both in terms of law enforcement frameworks and operational capacity, encouraging effective action by police and judicial authorities.

- **Improving cooperation on return and readmission is an important element of renewed partnerships** with third countries. Work will continue in the context of formal **readmission agreements or practical arrangements on return and readmission**, which by now have been put in place with 24 countries of origin and transit. **The Pact recalls the preference for voluntary return options**, which will be proactively supported. However, there are also people who do not take up this option. Together with partner countries, Commission services and the EEAS will also explore, as appropriate, the launch of new negotiations to facilitate cooperation, with a focus on practical cooperative solutions. **Support to sustainable reintegration** is an important additional element to strengthen our cooperation on return and readmission. A **Sustainable Voluntary Return and Reintegration Strategy** to be adopted in 2021 will be developed aiming to build partner countries' capacity and ownership.
- **About 2 million persons enter the EU legally every year. Expanding pathways for regular migration, including labour migration and the mobility of entrepreneurs, students and researchers is an important element of our comprehensive approach** to migration. It offers significant benefits for countries of origin and destination alike. Building on the experience with the pilot projects on legal migration, the Commission intends to launch **Talent Partnerships to support legal migration, training and mobility** with key third countries. The full implementation of the recently revised Visa Code and further visa facilitation with third countries should also encourage **short-term mobility**, including student exchanges.
- **Well-managed regular migration and mobility of people can offer benefits for countries of destination as well as for countries of origin.** Many countries depend on the contribution of remittances and labour migration (either as a sending or a receiving country) to their national economies and to poverty alleviation. As part of our comprehensive approach to migration, we are fully committed to work with our partners on harnessing and maximising these benefits. We will continue to promote cheaper, faster and safer transfer of **remittances**, as well as the involvement of **diasporas** in the countries of origin, including for developing productive investment and sharing expertise. We are committed to work with our partners on achieving decent and sustainable standards for recruitment and employment of labour migrants to ensure the protection of their rights and dignity.