



**PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE MEDITERRANEAN**  
**ASSEMBLÉE PARLEMENTAIRE DE LA MÉDITERRANÉE**  
برلمان البحر الأبيض المتوسط

**The Role of Parliaments in Fostering International Cooperation for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration**

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM) brings together several countries, people, and cultures from the Euro-Mediterranean and Gulf regions, to not only to enhance cooperation between countries, but also to give a voice to the local population, who should always be included in decision-making processes. In close collaboration with civil society, PAM establishes a connection between international organizations, national governments, and citizens, to advocate for peoples' rights. In the context of migration, we, elected representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly, are working to create a bridge between countries of origin, transit, and destination, by promoting an open and fruitful dialogue amongst our Parliaments. Parliamentary diplomacy is indeed the main means through which PAM attempts to respond, among others, to the most pressing migration issues of our time. From different countries and cultures, we, parliamentarians, have a common goal: to save lives (GCM Objective 8) and prevent further human tragedies from occurring.

To this end, since its establishment back in 2005, PAM has actively participated in several meetings on migration while being truly supportive of the International Organisation for Migration's valuable work. PAM has also contributed to a series of initiatives promoted by the secretariat of the UN Network on Migration. At the request of the President of the UN General Assembly, PAM has itself actively contributed to the adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) in Marrakech, with the organisation of preparatory consultations amongst parliamentarians from the region.

Widely acknowledged as a hotspot for migration, since the adoption of the GCM the Mediterranean Sea continues to be crossed by thousands of migrants, who risk their lives in search of better living and working conditions. Many of them go missing on their way to European shores. Recent estimates state that from January to September 2021, over 1,360 migrants lost their lives in the Mediterranean. Such high numbers of victims underline the need for our governments to consider migration as a top priority in their socio-political agenda.

Migrants reach Europe through three main routes, namely the Western route from Morocco to Spain, the Central route from Libya to Italy, and the Eastern route from the Horn of Africa and the Middle East to Europe through Turkey, Greece, and the Balkan countries. Among them, the Central route remains the deadliest one.

To save lives means addressing the root causes of unsafe and irregular migration. Crisis and conflict situations, as well as social distress and climate change, are some of the most common drivers for migration, which force people to leave their home hurriedly. Due to more and more frequent natural catastrophes, the number of people on the move due to sudden-onset and slow-onset natural disasters, the adverse effects of climate change, environmental degradation, as well as other precarious situations, has drastically increased over the last years. In this regard, PAM has therefore repeatedly called on the international community to agree on a suitable and detailed definition of "climate refugees" to be embedded in international law.

Xenophobia against migrants, and the stigmatization they undergo in countries of transit and destination, are also two key issues that still need to be properly tackled.

PAM is also deeply concerned with the grave humanitarian situation witnessed in the Mediterranean islands, where thousands of migrants are stranded with no prospects of a better future. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated the dire conditions in which they live, denying them access to the most basic services.

Therefore, we parliamentarians, as representatives of our people, have the responsibility to prevent social and humanitarian crises through direct engagement with the local population, to understand its needs and to help the most vulnerable.

On the occasion of the first International Migration Review Forum (IMRF), scheduled to be held in New York in May 2022, PAM will be reaffirming its commitment towards the promotion and protection of the rights of migrants. This Forum will be a valuable opportunity to broaden the work done so far, enhance international cooperation, strengthen collective action, and to increase the effectiveness of PAM's efforts to ensure safe, orderly, and regular migration in the Mediterranean.

*This piece is published as part of the UN Network on Migration's Guest Blog series and does not necessarily represent the views or opinions of the UN Network on Migration nor its Secretariat.*