

Secretary of State for Integration and Migration of the Portuguese Government

Regional Review of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in the UNECE region

(12 and 13 November 2020)

Roundtable 1 – GCM Objectives 14, 15, 16, 19, 20 and 22 Statement “From the Floor”

Portugal has worked in the field of migration for more than 20 years, developing public policies to better integrate migrants in our society, as recognized in the most recent OECD International Migration Outlook 20. Portugal stands out in the development of a whole of society approach, evolving not only the Central administration, but also the local level as well as civil society in the development of integration policies.

Integration is a two-way process, where both the hosting society and migrants benefit from each other, in each territory and specific reality. The Portuguese long tradition on welcoming migrants is anchored in a policy of integration of proximity. Since 2003, with the creation of the local centres for the support of the integration of migrants, we developed a proximity service that improves the local participation and integration, allowing migrants to be part of their integration process. Today, we count with 3 national support centres and 109 local support centres spread across the country. These proximity services provide support for migrants in their integration process, namely regarding documentation, access to Portuguese language courses, housing and education.

This focus on our main objective: we want to develop structural policies to reduce inequalities between migrants and nationals and to provide equal rights for every citizen that seeks our country to live and contribute, now and for the future. In this regard, and as the pandemic-induced disturbances affected the established timelines, during the SARS-CoV-2 period, all immigrants and asylum seekers staying in national territory with pending applications on the Immigration and Borders Service have had their situation regarded as regular, covering more than 246.000 migrants.

But I must mention that, at the same time, we were able not to stop from reaching the objectives we purposed regarding the implementation of our national plan. In fact, our whole of government approach in the implementation of the plan, and the periodic meetings we have between ministries and services, allowed us to have a prompt response when the pandemic started. We would

therefore invite you to read our national report, wrote for this review, where we mention the accomplishments in the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration.

Thank you very much. Keep safe.