

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 4 – GCM Objectives 1, 3, 7, 17 and 23 Statement “From the Floor”

Facts, data and evidences are as important as we, more than ever, must work together towards defining new sustainable strategies and approaches for migration.

In Portugal we count on an Observatory for Migration that provides data and information regarding migrants living in Portugal and the dimensions of integration. In a world where more than ever disinformation causes dangerous discourses, let me just show you an evidence that speaks for itself: Last year the contribution of immigrants to Portuguese Social Security system was EUR 884 million, that means the difference between what immigrants contributed and what they received; the social security system benefited from EUR 884 million. This is a clear indicator of the benefits of migration for hosting societies.

As we know, all the measures taken to help migrants, are win-win for the public policy, as they protect citizen from getting into vulnerable situation and help to enhance orderly, safe and regular migration. This can only be done if we have evidence in the field. The pandemic-induced disturbances clearly stated vulnerabilities that migrants face, for which we developed measures in 4 areas:

- 1. Documentation & Regularization:** with the extraordinary and temporary regularization of all immigrants and asylum seekers staying in national territory with pending applications on the Immigration and Borders Service, during the Sars-cov-2 period, which benefited more than 246.000 migrants. This decision was taken as an effort to save jobs, support families, and protect the rights of immigrants residing in Portugal.
- 2. Social protection:** Mapping of the needs and vulnerabilities of immigrants throughout the national territory, to establish appropriate social responses and ensure that children and young people under vulnerable situations were granted access to education.

3. **Access to health:** Exemption of charges for the diagnosis and treatment of the SARS-CoV-2 for migrants.
4. **Access to information:** All these things were perceived by immigrants, due to the Translation of materials alluding to the SARS-CoV-2 period and awareness-raising actions among immigrant populations, covering all vulnerable situations.

As our PM and the PR said, more than ever, we should treat immigrants as we would like Portuguese abroad to be treated, because this pandemic affects us all and doesn't look at nationalities. We must all be part of the solution of a better society and work towards the achievement of regular, safe and orderly migration.

Thank you very much. Keep safe.