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Second Regional Review of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Region

Inputs by Portugal to the Guiding Questions

a. 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.

Portugal was one of the first UN Member States to develop a National Implementation Plan for the Global Compact for Migration (PNIPGM, Plan), approved by the Resolution of the Council of Ministers no. 141/2019 of August 20, which implements the national response in matters of migration. Aligned with the GCM and the 2030 Agenda and SDG directives, the Plan promotes safe migrations and sustainable migration processes. The Plan, currently under review, comprises 97 measures with the involvement of all government areas, municipalities, and civil society organizations, who constantly work to implement, monitor and evaluate policies to facilitate integration, both at national and regional level.

The new Agency for Integration, Migration and Asylum (AIMA) is responsible for the implementation of the Plan. It was created in October 2023, a response to the Government's desire to implement a new paradigm in terms of reception, integration and asylum and embodies the separation of police and administrative functions. AIMA results in the merge of the former High Commission for Migration and the administrative competences of the former Immigration and Borders Service – SEF. With this change, a series of new measures, functionalities and policies will be put into place, looking to expand and improve the quality of access to services, reinforcing the security of processes and procedures and the trust and credibility of citizens and society in the system.

AIMA will also be responsible for managing an integrated network of response services for migrant citizens, at national level and in a network with local partners, through AIMA “one stop shop” (34 centres with specialized services such as support for learning the Portuguese language, employment, professional qualification and recognition of skills, as well as social responses, including victim support offices) and branches of other public institutions involved in the migration process such as the tax authority, social security and notary services. At local level, around 100 local support centres for the integration of



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migrants – CLAIMs – are part of this network managed by AIMA, in a coordinated intervention with national centres that aim at an integrated response and with the objective of social cohesion.

Through this pioneering approach, Portugal was named a “Champion Country” of the Network Initiative to support the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration.

b. 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.

During the IMRF 2022, Portugal highlighted the importance of developing of practices that consider the benefits of a safe, orderly and regular migration. Since then, we have intensified the work on implementing measures to ensure citizens’ access to services, particularly in a post-pandemic context. It is worth highlighting:

1. Guaranteeing access to primary health care and free vaccination for migrant citizens, regardless of their legal status, in order to ensure a nationwide response to integrated and universal health care.
2. Consolidation of the mobility agreement between the Member States of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP), by streamlining visa applications and strengthening digital platforms to speed up processes for citizens of Portuguese-speaking third-country nationals for organized migratory flows and effective integration.
3. Creation of the Agency for Integration, Migration and Asylum – AIMA, in October 2023, which advanced with a strong investment in digital infrastructure and human resources, with emphasis on strengthening the learning of the Portuguese language, reception and integration of migrants and refugees and streamlining pending documentation processes, with a focus on family reunification.
4. Independence of the Commission for Equality and Against Racial Discrimination (CICDR), which, through Law No. 3/2024, of January 15, as an administrative entity endowed with authoritative powers, and produces amendments to Law no. 93/2017, of 23 August, which establishes the legal regime for preventing, prohibiting and combating



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discrimination, based on racial and ethnic origin, colour, nationality, and territory of origin. CICDR will operate under the National Parliament.

Due to these and other initiatives Portugal has registered a positive evolution regarding SDG 10, more specifically, target 10.7 “Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people”, as expressed in our 2nd Voluntary National Review presented at the 2023 High-Level Political Forum.

c. 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.

We highlight some achievements since the implementation of the National Implementation Plan for the Global Compact for Migration (PNIPGM, Plan), in 2020:

- In the context of promoting safe, orderly and regular migration: The mobility agreement between the Member States of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP) signed in July 2021, in Luanda, Angola, on the occasion of the XIII Conference of Chiefs of State and Government of the CPLP, aiming to speed up and make regular migration flows, including movement and residence, between the various CPLP Member States.

- Improving the organization of migratory flows and integrated border management: The protocol for defining action procedures aimed at preventing, detecting and protecting children (presumed) victims of Human Trafficking – Page 3 of 17 National Reference System, launched in 2021, reinforced and consolidated coordination, cooperation and communication mechanisms between professionals involved in preventing and combating child trafficking, with a special focus on migrant children.

- Supporting the connection of migrants to their country of origin. The National Program to Support Investment in the Diaspora, launched in 2020 and which aims to encourage the return and investment of the Diaspora in Portugal, as well as benefiting from the presence of Portuguese communities abroad, has already allowed the granting of more than 200 Diaspora Investor Status.

- Increasing development partnerships with countries of origin and transit. In September 2021 and January 2022, labour mobility agreements were signed with India and Morocco, respectively, currently in the process of being operationalized, thus seeking to increase and enhance the regularity of migratory flows as an opportunity for countries of origin and destination.



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d. What are the main gaps and challenges to existing inter- and cross-regional collaboration on the implementation of the GCM?

Portugal recognizes the existence of diverse perspectives amongst regional non-governmental organizations for developing and strengthening bilateral, subregional, regional, interregional and global dialogues, information sharing, and initiatives.

We find that there are also major differences in legislation, policies, budgets and structure between Member States in the implementation of the GCM. To counter this, there should be an increase in regional and subregional monitoring and evaluation, allowing stakeholders to identify patterns and causes of progress, stagnation or regression in their efforts to implement the GCM, as well as, fostering meaningful engagement, cooperation and partnerships with relevant stakeholders in the design, implementation, monitoring, and review stages of migration policy.

On a more specific level, we find that the lack of mutual recognition of migrants' skills and qualifications (objective 5) limits their potential, the benefits they can obtain from their work, as well as their contributions to sustainable development, leaves migrants vulnerable to exploitation.

Many migrant workers, especially female, continue to face precarious working conditions, labour exploitation, reduced wages, discriminatory dismissals, forced unpaid leave and prolonged separation from their families, among the challenges at this level relate to the simplification of migrants' access to institutions authorized to recognize academic and professional qualifications, the improvement of procedures for the recognition of skills and qualifications of foreign citizens, in terms of reducing bureaucracy, the creation of procedures alternatives for verifying foreign qualifications, with particular focus on applicants in emergency situations for humanitarian reasons (objective 18 of the PNIPGM), among others.

e. 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.

Some actions could support the region in its effectiveness in implementing the GCM objectives:



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- Incentives to governments for a broader characterization of the migrant population, their flow and phenomena assessment, with the involvement of private civil society institutions, such as migrant representative organizations, universities, and entrepreneurs' companies, for a targeted response to local needs and a human contribution to energize the country. (Objectives 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 15, 16 and 17).
- Political advice at regional and inter-regional level, to value the contributions of migrants, with an impact on valuing their importance for host societies and the consequent combat against discrimination and xenophobia, with the support for migrant civic participation through migrant organizations (Objectives 10, 11, 12, 14 and 17).
- Reinforcement of internal political advice for effective decentralization, more partnerships and an increase in the number of Municipal Plans for the Integration of Migrants (Objective 16), which aim to implement measures that facilitate local access to basic rights for citizens and their full integration.
- Maintenance of the present agreements and establishment of new bilateral agreements through summits and inter-regional partnerships to reinforce consular cooperation of the most representative countries (objectives 22 and 23).