



## INDEX

1. 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. ....	2
2. How has or will your government integrate the recommended actions to accelerate the implementation of the GCM as set out in the IMRF Progress Declaration into their relevant national policies and plans, and reflected in their engagements in relevant international fora? .....	4
a. Measures taken to promote the recognition of migrants as an integral part of society .....	4
b. Elimination of all forms of discrimination .....	6
c. Respect, protection and guarantee of human rights, including minors, victims of gender-based violence, victims of trafficking and vulnerable groups.....	9
d. Transparency and truthful, objective and reliable information .....	19
e. Elimination of adverse and structural factors that prevent people from creating and maintaining sustainable livelihoods and fulfilling their personal aspirations and tackling the root causes of migration .....	24
f. Improvement and diversification of the pathways available for safe, orderly and regular migration .....	26
g. Cooperation for a return in dignity and safety.....	30
h. Facilitation of mutual recognition of migrants' formally and informally acquired skills and competences .....	31
i. Providing migrants with access to basic services .....	31
j. Fight against irregular migration, mafias and smugglers, who endanger the lives of migrants .....	32
k. Improvement of search and rescue activities .....	38
3. List some examples of promising practices and lessons learned that relate to inter- and cross-regional collaboration .....	39
4. What are the main gaps and challenges to existing inter- and cross-regional collaboration on the implementation of the GCM? .....	41
5. 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. 42	



**1. 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.**

Spain is firmly committed to the fulfilment of the objectives outlined in the GCM, in line with its 360-degree vision, guiding principles and comprehensive approach, thus facilitating safe, orderly and regular migration, promoting the contributions of migrants at all skill levels to sustainable development at local, national, regional and global levels, within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and reducing the incidence and negative impact of irregular migration.

In this context, the different ministries of the Spanish Government that have competences in the area of migration have taken into account the objectives and commitments of the GCM in the drafting of their migration policies, agreements and plans, integrating the principles of the Pact in a cross-cutting manner in all their actions.

An example of this would be the development of the *National Strategic Plan against Trafficking and Exploitation of Human Beings 2021-2023* (PENTRA), which establishes the detection and prevention of trafficking as one of its priority objectives. One of its lines of action is the improvement of the degree of awareness in society, which is materialised through the promotion of general prevention and awareness campaigns.

In general, the evolution of the migratory phenomenon has been a constant cause of successive reforms of immigration legislation and its implementation through different measures. All of them are based on principles including the management of labour migration flows in accordance with the national employment situation, the social integration of immigrants, the fight against irregular migration and relations with third countries in the field of migration.

On the other hand, the reform of immigration regulations also offers the opportunity to clarify, simplify and organise complex procedures, whose processing can be improved from the perspective of agility and legal certainty. The adaptation and systematic reordering of some procedures, the distinction between requirements and supporting documents, a greater specification and simplification of all of them, as well as a clearer regulation of the relationship between authorisations and visas that avoids double checks, are improvements that undoubtedly contribute to enhancing the management and legal security of immigration procedures.



The introduction of new technologies in an area with such a high volume of management deserves a special mention in this regard. Specifically, Spain is implementing a common application that will allow the integration of all the procedural phases and their management by the various administrations with competence in migration matters, as well as a better relationship with citizens, in line with the regulations on electronic access to public services.

Likewise, the Spanish legislation on immigration is clearly committed to providing rigour, transparency and objectivity to the procedures. The aim is, in short, to improve legal certainty by means of more detailed and specific provisions that reduce the need to refer to other regulations, and the introduction of new technologies in the existing procedures. Both of these are new developments that will undoubtedly contribute to improving management and, with it, the needs of the various actors involved in the field of migration.

The work of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) and the International and Ibero-American Foundation for Administration and Public Policy (FIIAPP), the agencies of the Spanish cooperation system, which take the principles of the GCM into account in all their actions, should also be noted. Thus, both of them always draw up their strategies and projects in constant and close contact with the beneficiary countries, and incorporate other departments and administrative levels, as well as organised civil society, in the implementation of projects, hence applying the GCM's whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches at the project level.

FIIAPP, which according to Law 1/2023, of 20 February, on Cooperation for Sustainable Development and Global Solidarity, is the agency specialising in the promotion and management of the participation of public administrations and their bodies in Spanish and European cooperation programmes and projects, focuses on sustainable development results. In this sense, FIIAPP aims to enhance the public systems of the countries in which it works by accompanying the reform and improvement of public policies. Therefore, it directs all its actions towards the improvement of public systems through the construction of institutional alliances among public administrations.

With regard to migration and human mobility, FIIAPP carries out actions to improve public systems in almost all areas of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs: migration and human mobility policies, rights and development, integrated border management, labour migration and integration of migrants, circular migration, protection of migrants and victims of trafficking and smuggling crimes, and fight against human trafficking and smuggling.



**2. How has or will your government integrate the recommended actions to accelerate the implementation of the GCM as set out in the IMRF Progress Declaration into their relevant national policies and plans, and reflected in their engagements in relevant international fora?**

The following is a summary of the measures taken by Spain to implement the commitments made in the IMFR Declaration of Progress:

**a. Measures taken to promote the recognition of migrants as an integral part of society**

Spain is well aware of the importance of involving other administrations, civil society, non-governmental organisations, etc., in the design and implementation of all policies, particularly those related to migration, in accordance with the whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches advocated by the GCM. In fact, Law 50/1997, of 27 November 1997, of the Government, establishes that, for the drafting of regulations, a prior public consultation must be carried out so that all potential addressees of the regulation have the possibility of expressing their opinion. In practice, Spain is thus taking up the request made by civil society at the International Migration Review Forum in 2022, in particular the call for migration policies to no longer be made for migrants without migrants.

The Forum for the Social Integration of Immigrants (FISI), in addition, must report on any measure that affects migrants in one way or another prior to its approval. This Forum is the Spanish Government's consultation, information and advisory body on immigrant integration. Its goal is to promote the participation of immigrants in the Spanish society, proposing, informing and channelling actions aimed at these ends. FISI is made up of immigrant associations, the associative networks that support immigrants together with trade unions and employers and, as a third element, the public administrations with competences in migration at the national, regional and local levels.

FISI's functions include the preparation of an annual report on the situation of the social integration of immigrants and refugees in Spain; and the elaboration of mandatory reports on draft legislation affecting the social integration of immigrants, as well as on state-level plans and programmes related to this issue, always prior to their approval. It met nine times in 2022 and six times in 2023. In 2022, five mandatory reports were produced, and in 2023, a total of three.



Furthermore, on 4 July 2023, the Government of Spain approved the *Strategic Framework for Citizenship and Inclusion against Racism and Xenophobia* for the period 2023-2027. This is an essential instrument to fulfil the Government's commitment to welcome and facilitate the inclusion of people of foreign origin seeking refuge and asylum, whether they are newly arrived immigrants or already residing in Spain; as well as to fight racism, xenophobia and other forms of associated intolerance, as an essential pillar to achieve integration and inclusion and improve coexistence.

To this end, six policy blocks have been established from a multilevel governance approach. They have been framed within the perspective of human rights, children's rights and child participation, gender, and intersectional: (1) Administrative Legal Framework; (2) Humanitarian Care, International Protection, Temporary Protection, Statelessness and Reintegration; (3) Active Inclusion; (4) Participation and Coexistence; (5) Prevention, Awareness and Intervention against racism, xenophobia and associated intolerance; (6) Care and Reparation for victims of racism, xenophobia and associated intolerance and victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation.

In each of these policy blocks, specific lines of action (23 in total) and 45 tactical objectives are proposed. In addition, a set of possible actions and indicators for monitoring and evaluation has been drawn up to analyse progress in the integration and inclusion of immigrants in Spain.

Besides, in order to promote the integration of immigrants, Spain held the first state meeting on planning in the field of migration management, cultural diversity and social coexistence from the public administrations (MIGRADMI) on 28 and 29 September 2023 at the University of La Laguna (Tenerife). The meeting was promoted by the *Canarias Convive* programme, with the collaboration of the Spanish Observatory of Racism and Xenophobia in Spain (OBERAXE).

The objective of MIGRADMI was to respond to, on the one hand, the need to create a space to share diagnoses and experiences of intervention linked to thematic areas of strategic planning in the field of migration, diversity and coexistence (humanitarian care, coexistence, housing, health, employment, social services, education, prevention of racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance). On the other hand, MIGRADMI sought to deepen the knowledge and exchange of experiences in technical sections linked to the design, implementation and development of strategic planning.



The MISSM, through the Directorate for International Protection and Humanitarian Assistance Programmes, with the aim of fostering coexistence and social cohesion, preventing xenophobia, racism and other related forms of intolerance and promoting the rights of immigrants, annually announces grants to promote the development of actions of general interest in this regard. All of this is without prejudice to the social assistance actions that, within the scope of their competencies, correspond to the Spanish regions.

#### **b. Elimination of all forms of discrimination**

Spain's commitment in this field is clear. For this reason, it has OBERAXE, an entity created by Article 71 of Organic Law 4/2000, of 11 January, on the rights and freedoms of foreigners in Spain and their social integration.

This Observatory carries out an analysis of the situation and evolution of racism and xenophobia and other forms of intolerance in Spain, through studies, surveys and reports. The aim of its work is to contribute to guiding policies for the integration of the migrant population and to prevent xenophobia and racism.

Thirteen studies and reports were published in 2022 as part of the editorial plan of the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration (MISSM),<sup>1</sup> as well as six bimonthly social media hate speech-monitoring bulletins.

Furthermore, among the national agreements that exist to combat discrimination, the work done within the framework of the *Agreement to cooperate institutionally in the fight against racism, xenophobia, LGBTIphobia and other forms of intolerance*, signed in 2015, and renewed in 2018 and in September 2022, must be highlighted. This agreement has been signed by the General Council of the Judiciary, the Prosecutor General's Office, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Interior (MIR), the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, the Ministry of Culture and Sport, the Ministry of Social Rights and Agenda 2030, the Ministry of Equality, the MISSM, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Digital Transformation and the Centre for Legal Studies.

It is also worth mentioning that among the activities for the promotion of the principle of equal treatment and non-discrimination, during the period 2022-2023, OBERAXE led

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.inclusion.gob.es/oberaxe/es/publicaciones/index.htm>



or participated as a partner in the following projects co-funded by the European Commission:

- European project *LEARN (Local Entities Against Racism Network)*
- European project *REAL UP (Hate Speech, Racism and Xenophobia: Alert Mechanisms and Response, Analysis of the Upstander Speech)*
- European project *CISDO (Interpol and Social Cooperation against Hate Crimes)*
- European project *CLARA (Local Learning Communities Against Racism, Xenophobia and Hate Speech)*
- European project *SCORE (Sports cities that stand up to racism in Europe)*
- European project *HELCI-ERASMUS+ (University Learning Community for Inclusion and Non-discrimination)*
- European project *IMMERSE (Integration Mapping of Refugee and Migrant Children in Schools and Other Experiential Environments in Europe)*

Also significant is the project *Living together without discrimination in Morocco: a human rights and gender-based approach (2017-2022)*, funded by the European Union (EU) and implemented by FIIAPP in cooperation with OBERAXE. This project supported the improvement of independent mechanisms for the identification and collection of complaints in the field of human rights protection, considering the gender perspective. Specifically, it created a Framework of Reference to prevent racism and xenophobia, addressing legislative aspects, information systems and protocols. Legislative proposals were generated to strengthen public entities at the national and regional levels, in accordance with human rights and international agreements signed by Morocco.

Complementarily, existing systems (both hardware and software) were upgraded to facilitate incident collection and data analysis. This initiative focused on strengthening Morocco's National Human Rights Council for the reporting and monitoring of incidents related to racism and xenophobia. The objective was to promote and protect human rights, namely by improving the social perception of immigration. This was achieved through awareness-raising campaigns that positively inform about immigration, highlighting the risk of stigmatisation of the immigrant population. The project also established a forum for the exchange of experiences between associations and provided support for the comparative study of regulations on racial discrimination. Finally, successful experiences from countries such as Tunisia were shared to inspire the effective inclusion of the migrant population.



It should also be noted that, since 2017, OBERAXE has been collaborating with the European Commission in monitoring exercises carried out in compliance with the *Code of conduct on countering illegal hate speech online*, which was signed with hosting service providers.

The MIR also carries out actions to combat racism, xenophobia and hate crimes. Specifically, the National Office for Combating Hate Crimes successively and continuously implements the *II Action Plan against Hate Crimes (2022-2024)* through different mechanisms:

1. Meetings with the central social partners of Policía Nacional and Guardia Civil.
2. Within the framework of the *Agreement for inter-institutional cooperation in the fight against racism, xenophobia, LGBTIFOBIA and other forms of intolerance*, in which the National Office for Combating Hate Crimes (ONDOD) participates with other Ministries, the General Council of the Judiciary and the Prosecutor General's Office.
3. Through the identification of hate crimes and discrimination and the treatment of their victims, including migrants.
4. In the curricula of the academies or schools of the State Security Forces and Corps (FCSE).
5. At congresses and seminars organised by ONDOD or at others in which the Office collaborates.
6. Through the different meetings of the High Level Group on Combating Hate Speech and Hate Crime.
7. Through the European project *REAL UP*, which is part of the European Commission's *Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme (CESR)*, which ends in June 2024. Its aim is to improve the capacities of state authorities to identify, analyse, monitor and evaluate online hate speech in order to develop and strengthen counter-narrative (upstander) strategies against hate speech motivated by racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and anti-Gypsyism by discussing and generating a map of good practices and effective teaching tools in the matter.

Likewise, and more generally, the MIR promotes the participation of FCSE personnel as trainees and experts in the training activities offered by CEPOL in the field of hate crime. In general, it must be noted that continuous training should be seen and in fact is seen as a means of permanent adaptation to the demands required in the performance of daily work, and as an essential element for the personal development of agents. This training process is adjusted to the individual needs of each job, to those of each unit and





to those of the FCSE themselves, and should continue throughout the officer's working life.

**c. Respect, protection and guarantee of human rights, including minors, victims of gender-based violence, victims of trafficking and vulnerable groups**

In order to guarantee respect for the human rights of migrants, the FCSE elaborate and develop their own training actions in this area, both at the level of general knowledge in basic training programmes for students, and at the specialist level, in specialisation and refresher programmes for the personnel that make up the investigation units.

Policía Nacional also has a Human Rights and Equality Contact Point, which participates in courses on immigration where it addresses these issues.

For its part, Guardia Civil, in all its training days, continues to raise awareness in society, as well as among Guardia Civil itself, through the dissemination of information on the subject on its official accounts on the most popular social networks among the Spanish population (Facebook, Instagram, Tiktok...).

Moreover, work has continued on respecting, protecting and guaranteeing the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants, especially those of women and children, regardless of their migratory status. In this context, some of the normative reforms pushed forward by MISSM in recent years are worth highlighting:

1. In 2021, the Regulation on Immigration was amended with the aim of favouring the integration of unaccompanied foreign minors and young people in detention, reducing the bureaucratic obstacles to obtaining their documentation, improving their rights (through the possibility of working when they reach the age allowed by Spanish labour regulations, for instance), while promoting their inclusion in society.

In order to monitor the results of this reform, the Deputy Directorate for Migration Analysis (MISSM) has designed an experimental statistic that every six months quantifies and analyses the legal and labour record of foreigners who were at some point under guardianship as minors and who on the reference date are between 16 and 23 years of age. This analysis is published on the MISSM website.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> It can be consulted at <https://extranjeros.inclusion.gob.es/es/Estadisticas/operaciones/menores/index.html>.



The results indicate that more than 17,000 people have benefited from the measures of the reform of late 2021 and that the incorporation of young foreigners in-care and out-of-care into the Spanish labour market has improved substantially: the employment rate of 16-to-23 year-olds in the first six months of the reform rose from 28% to 51%. Besides, the sectors of employment have diversified beyond the concentration of this group in the agricultural sector, which was previously the case.

2. In July 2022, the Regulation on Immigration was further amended, with, i.a, the following objectives:

- Facilitation of the stay and work of foreign students.
- Update and improvement of the ways in which persons in an irregular situation can obtain a residence and work permit.
- Creation of a new concept of "arraigo" (rooting) for training, which would allow people who have been in an irregular situation in Spain for 2 years -and are receiving training in an occupation regarded as difficult to cover- to obtain authorisation to reside and work. Some points were made more flexible in 2023.
- Promotion of regular migration by facilitating the entry of entrepreneurs, favouring recruitment at origin and providing more stability to circular migration processes through the creation of a four-year authorisation (which reduces bureaucratic hurdles and provides legal certainty for both companies and migrant workers themselves).
- Introduction of improvements in administrative management through the creation of the Unit for the Processing of Foreigners' Files to support with a greater workload.

Just as with the reform of the 2021 Regulation, the Deputy Directorate of Migration Analysis (MISSM) has designed an experimental statistic to monitor the impact of the reform in the area of "arraigo" every six months.<sup>3</sup>

3. In 2023, the Organic Law on Immigration was amended to extend the temporary residence and work permit from foreign women victims of gender violence to victims of sexual violence, regardless of their administrative status in Spain.

Spain has also participated in international forums and conferences to ensure respect for migrants' rights. This debate has in fact been included in a cross-cutting manner in

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<sup>3</sup> Its results can be consulted at <https://www.inclusion.gob.es/web/opi/estadisticas/catalogo/arraigo>.



other meetings. For example, in the thematic meeting on legal migration held during the Spanish Presidency of the Rabat Process in September 2022, or in the European Migration Network<sup>4</sup> (EMN) National Conference on the future of legal and labour migration, held on 16 and 17 November 2023 in the framework of the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the EU.

In order to better address the gender-based violence suffered by migrant women in Spain, the Directorate for the Management of the Reception of International and Temporary Protection System modified the *Protocol in response to violence against women within the Reception of International and Temporary Protection System*. This improvement, introduced by Resolution of the Directorate General on 22 December 2022, was made taking into consideration the multiple factors of vulnerability that aggravate their situation, and paying special attention to forced migration, as it is often the case of women applicants and beneficiaries of international and temporary protection.

Aiming at facilitating the implementation of this *Protocol*, a project was launched in collaboration with the UNHCR — under the name of *Seed Project* — and the Government Delegation against Gender Violence. All the entities that make up the shelter system participated in the project as well. The objective of this project was to seek efficiency in the implementation of the *Protocol*, improve prevention, risk mitigation and response to situations of gender-based violence in the framework of the reception system. The implementation of the protocol was completed in December 2023. Afterwards, the working group which was created with the entities has been maintained and still exists.

In the context of the emergency brought about by the war in Ukraine, the MISSM organised the opening of four Reception, Attention and Referral Centres (CREADE) located in Madrid, Barcelona, Malaga and Alicante to provide care for people displaced from Ukraine. One of the main measures applied in the CREADEs is the creation of the *Protocol for the prevention, detection, care and referral of possible victims of human trafficking*, approved in January 2023. Its aim is to establish guidelines for action in the CREADEs when there is suspicion that a person may be the subject of a situation of human trafficking. Hence, taking into account their vulnerability, victims of human trafficking are allocated specific accommodation places, where specialised assistance is provided (legal, health, psychological, socio-labour, etc).

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<sup>4</sup> [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/european-migration-network-emn\\_en](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/european-migration-network-emn_en).



Likewise, the *Procedure for the referral of potential victims of trafficking in human beings seeking international protection at Madrid-Barajas airport*, active since 15 October 2019, is still applicable. It establishes the guidelines for action on the arrival of foreign persons of legal age or family units at airports seeking international protection when they are suspected to be victims of trafficking in human beings. This procedure allows any professional who has been assigned functions during the process to correctly refer these persons within the framework of the International and Temporary Protection Reception System.

On the other hand, the MIR has also taken measures to protect victims of labour and sexual exploitation. The work to raise awareness in society, as well as among the members of the FCSE, through the dissemination of information on the subject on the MIR's official accounts on different social networks (Facebook, Instagram, Tiktok...). Similarly, campaigns launched in previous years continue to be active, such as #trabajoforzoso (forced labour), which intends to raise public awareness of this criminal activity.

In order to prevent and protect victims, the FCSE have also stepped up inspections in places where activities involving risk of exploitation unfold, both in the labour and sexual spheres. The FCSE work together with the Labour and Social Security Inspectorate (ITSS) to corroborate that the hiring process is legal and to ensure that the working conditions are adequate.

The MIR has also participated in the Working Group for monitoring the *National Plan against Forced Labour*, in which the cooperation of the FCSE with the ITSS is facilitated and joint actions are coordinated. By way of example, in 2023, Guardia Civil carried out 1,494 inspections in work centres and premises where prostitution is practised for the prevention of human trafficking. The total number of persons identified in these inspections amounted to 7,836. Of these, 5,660 were identified in work centres and 2,176 in places where prostitution is practised.

Besides, it is worth highlighting the work carried out by Policía Nacional and Guardia Civil to protect vulnerable people or those in need of international protection. Both forces have specific protocols for the identification and protection of these persons, which are incorporated into the joint operations of Spain and Frontex in our country (*Indalo, Canarias, Minerva and Focal Points Air*).



To combat trafficking in human beings, examples of good practices of the MIR are the adoption of the aforementioned *PENTRA*, as well as the participation of Guardia Civil in the *HACKATHON* events organised by EUROPOL on trafficking in human beings. These activities consist of intensive online search days for trafficking or exploitation crimes, as well as the acquisition of knowledge to carry out intelligence work in open sources for the possible detection of cases of trafficking or sexual exploitation.

Guardia Civil has also signed a collaboration protocol with A21, an entity specialised in the protection of victims of human trafficking. Within this cooperation framework, multilingual passports ("Passport to indicators of trafficking") have been created and distributed throughout the country, especially at strategic entry points for migrants. The dissemination of these passports facilitates the prevention and prosecution of trafficking offences by providing the victim with criteria for self-identification, before or during exploitation.

In this sense, the FCSE have also signed cooperation agreements with other entities to collaborate in the fight against human trafficking. Such collaboration with specialised entities for the referral of victims is fundamental, which is why two protocols for the protection of victims have been established with two specialised organisations: APRAMP and Diaconía. Both are institutions with accredited experience in the treatment of victims of human trafficking, and work hand in hand with Guardia Civil. Their activity includes collaboration in inspections, interviews with potential victims, creation of joint manuals and participation in different protection and awareness campaigns.

With the aim of encompassing all possible actors, Policía Nacional has held workshops with aviation companies to detect potential victims of human trafficking, as well as people seeking to enter the country irregularly. Guardia Civil also collaborates with the private sector, such as transport companies and farmers' associations, in information and training sessions to raise their awareness and involve them in the detection of human trafficking.

Equally noteworthy is the training work on human trafficking and smuggling of migrants made by Policía Nacional and Guardia Civil in the framework of various projects developed by FIIAPP in different countries within the *EUROFRONT* project (Spain, Colombia, Ecuador, Dominican Republic...), as well as in the framework of the European *GAR-SI Sahel* project. Training in the latter project has been provided by operational experts: two from Guardia Civil and one from the French Gendarmerie, as well as experts from international UN organisations such as the IOM, the UNODC and the UNHCHR. Nor



should we underestimate the training that FCSE agents themselves receive within the framework of CEPOL on human rights and human trafficking. In addition, through the different manuals published on the corporative intranet of Policía Nacional and Guardia Civil, as well as in the training given in the access and professional promotion courses, the agents are instructed at the national level on the indicators of trafficking and the procedures to follow.

With regard to other vulnerable groups, such as minors, especially those who are unaccompanied, it should be noted that any formalities relating to their personal documentation are processed in a prioritary manner, in application of the principle of the best interests of the minor. The same applies to formalities with health institutions, also when they are linked to age determination.

As a result of the research carried out in Spain in relation to unaccompanied foreign minors, the FCSE have held various meetings and training courses aimed at updating knowledge regarding actions related to them. The study of this problem has shown the importance of providing training and refresher courses in order to raise awareness and reduce this phenomenon. For the year 2024, two face-to-face courses and two online courses have been scheduled.

In this sense, the Asylum and Refuge Office (OAR) is currently processing a specific protocol for the care of minors, in the conviction that they constitute a particularly vulnerable group that deserves differentiated and specialised attention.

In the specific case of minors who have been victims of trafficking, the FCSE, in application of the *Framework Protocol for the Protection of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings*, promote collaboration and cooperation with the child protection services, acting as soon as possible to take the appropriate actions for the identification of victims by agents with specific training, applying protection and security measures. This collaboration also includes the exchange of information to try to identify possible perpetrators of the crime. The exchange is made with full respect for national and European regulations on the protection of personal data, through offices such as EUROPOL, INTERPOL or SIRENE.

This *Framework Protocol* regulates the measures necessary to establish the identity, nationality and/or place of origin of the minor. It also establishes the rules regarding cases of unaccompanied minors, in which the necessary means are activated to find their families, as well as to guarantee their representation.



In this context, the co-leadership of Guardia Civil in Operational Action 2.4, led by FRONTEX, on the identification of children at risk of trafficking at the external borders of the EU, is also noteworthy. The main objective of the action was to protect and detect possible cases of human trafficking involving minors and women.

With regard to vulnerable migrants seeking international protection, the MIR has considerably strengthened the resources allocated to this issue. At the end of 2023, a new Directorate General was created: the Directorate General for International Protection, which will assume the competences related to the investigation and resolution of administrative files on international protection and statelessness, in addition to the investigation and resolution of administrative files in cases of mass influxes of displaced persons, among others. The creation of this Directorate General is a response to the significant increase in human resources and the expansion of the OAR's facilities.

Once they arrive in Spain, undocumented migrants also become a *per se* vulnerable group. For this reason, it is critical to pay attention to the living conditions they have in the Immigration Detention Centres (CIEs). In order to guarantee respect for their rights, training activities continue to be arranged for the members of Policía Nacional who serve in these centres. In addition, the Inspection of Personnel and Services (IPSS) of the MIR, established in article 50.1 of Royal Decree 162/2014, of 14 March, which approves the Regulations on the operation and internal regime of the Immigration Detention Centres, carries out systematic inspections. Each CIE is inspected at least every two years. In the development of these actions, the IPSS staff also undertakes information and dissemination work on issues related to human rights. Recently, Instruction 1/2024, issued by the Secretary of State for Security and aimed at staff working with foreigners and in custody in CIEs, approving the "comprehensive detention procedure", was approved. This is an example of the awareness and commitment that exists in this area.

The MISSM is also responsible for, i.a., the planning, development and management of humanitarian care programmes for migrants and the coordination and planning of urgent intervention actions for exceptional situations and humanitarian emergencies. The Ministry does so in collaboration, when appropriate, with the Spanish regions, Government Delegations and Deputy Delegations, local corporations, as well as public and private entities.



Within the framework of the exercise of these powers, the *Humanitarian Assistance Programme* is developed. Its goal is to provide for the basic needs of migrants who reach the Spanish coasts or enter through the cities of Ceuta and Melilla and are in a situation of vulnerability due to physical deterioration and lack of social, family and economic support. In addition, it includes the development of emergency socio-health care services, shelter, supply of material to cover basic needs, basic economic aid and transfers.

Since early summer 2023, there has been a steady increase in the number of arrivals on the Spanish coasts (in particular in the Canary Islands), of persons who can benefit from the resources of the *Humanitarian Assistance Programme*. In order to prevent a situation of excessive pressure on existing capacities, the Secretariat of State for Migration monitored the arrival times and the occupancy of the system on a daily basis. The arrival figures to date, nevertheless, have exceeded even the most pessimistic forecasts, far surpassing all records of previous years. In this line, measures have been adopted to try to maximise the use of available resources and to expand capacities through regular management procedures. On the other hand, through emergency procedures, the means and places available have been significantly increased.

Furthermore, the MISSM has a social cohesion service whose main function is the management of subsidies and other financing and management instruments for collaboration with public and private entities in the area of humanitarian assistance and defence of the human rights of migrants. It also cooperates with public and private entities whose activities are related to this area.

During the years 2022 and 2023, subsidies have been called for the development of actions of general interest in the area of immigration, aimed at defending the human rights of migrants, as well as favouring coexistence and social cohesion. These subsidies were co-financed by EU funds. Within the framework of these calls, more than 200 projects were implemented in 2023. They can be classified as follows:

- Projects of integrated and personalised itineraries of insertion
- Awareness and prevention projects
- Projects of prevention and fight against hate crimes and hate speech
- Projects of prevention of exclusion and discrimination, and promotion and protection of human rights:
  - Itineraries for social inclusion of migrants in settlements





- Projects for the prevention and comprehensive protection of victims or potential victims of gender-based violence
- Projects for the prevention and comprehensive protection of victims or potential victims of human trafficking
- Projects of equipment and adaptation of buildings

On the other hand, in relation to minors, the best interest of the minor is always paramount. Therefore, from the first steps of the assistance programme, an assessment of profiles and needs is made and, in the case of family units with dependent minors, there is a phase of evaluation in which the presence of a minor is a central feature of vulnerability that conditions the whole process.

Similarly, among the various actions that could be mentioned, in the case of humanitarian attention, there are specific mechanisms for the care of families with minors, as well as continuous work with the police and other administrations for the detection and care of unaccompanied minors.

Besides, in the field of international protection there are specific protocols and services, such as:

- Regarding education, advice and guidance are provided for admission procedures in schools. Financial aid is offered to beneficiaries to cover additional expenses such as paying for school meals or school materials.
- There are specific protocols for dealing with victims of sexual exploitation and abuse or possible cases of human trafficking.
- Access to information adapted to their age and maturity is facilitated.
- On a more recreational level, but equally important for their wellbeing, specific healthy and alternative leisure activities are implemented, as well as spaces for children with the aim of preventing possible psychological disorders, especially in the case of minors coming from areas of armed conflict and who have been victims of violence.

Finally, it should also be mentioned that the technical teams of the reception centres are multidisciplinary in nature and are composed of psychologists, social workers and other social experts that provide psychosocial care during the stay so that the recovery throughout the process is complete, thus favouring the best possible integration of the minors in the reception context.



Besides, the efforts made by FIIAPP to protect vulnerable migrants in other countries must also be considered. An example of this is the *CADAP* programme (*Cooperation Programme between the EU and Central Asian Countries for Drug Demand Reduction 2021-2024*), funded by the EU and implemented by FIIAPP. The seventh phase of the programme has supported, together with GIZ (Germany), the development of a bio-behavioural study on HIV incidence among migrant workers in Kyrgyzstan, which will enable the Kyrgyz Ministry of Health to use the data from the study in the formulation of public policies aimed at the protection of this group.

Still in the field of the fight against drugs, we can mention the *COPOLAD III* programme (*EU-LAC bi-regional cooperation programme on drug policies*) (2021-2025), financed by the EU and co-implemented by the FIIAPP. This programme promotes the development of national systems for the social and labour reintegration of people with drug use problems, connecting the therapeutic processes of care networks with tools that consolidate the circle of recovery and facilitate the cost-effectiveness of care interventions. The programme places a special focus on vulnerable populations, namely women, LGBTI+ population, migrants and young people.

Equally noteworthy is the *EU4DecentWork* programme in Mexico (2023-2026), funded by the EU and co-implemented by FIIAPP. One of its specific deliverables is to address and improve policy, legal and/or regulatory frameworks for the social protection of various labour groups, as well as to facilitate their access to formal jobs and fair working conditions, in coordination with the Mexican Labour, Migration and Social Security Council. In line with the *National Development Plan 2018-2024*, work will be done on reform at federal and state level to benefit agricultural day labourers, domestic workers, migrants, refugees, returnees, displaced persons, persons with disabilities, workers exposed to high-risk activities and workers on digital platforms. The project has a priority focus on the most vulnerable groups involved in the informal economy, such as women, youth and people on the move whose final destination is Mexico. Specific actions of the programme include the review of employment policies, assessing the obstacles faced by the most vulnerable workers and those most at risk of social exclusion. This includes the optimisation of funds for social security inspection, thus contributing to a fairer and safer working environment. All these actions are based on the conviction that labour migration can be a key opportunity for the economic development of the country, as inefficient integration of migrants and refugees results in economic losses and an inability to meet the labour demand of the private sector.



On the other hand, within the framework of the *SOCIEUX* project 2020-2024 (*EU Facility for Employment, Labour and Social Protection*), FIIAPP has worked with the Peruvian Ministry of Labour and Employment Promotion to support the strengthening of social protection agreements for Peruvian migrant workers, with the aim of improving their social security coverage. As part of this project, support was also provided in Ecuador, together with the IOM, for the updating of the *Inspector's Manual: the role of the Labour Inspectorate in the protection of workers in contexts of human mobility*, which allows for better coverage of migrant workers. Still under the umbrella of *SOCIEUX*, a conference on public employment services and migration was organised with the National Agency for the Promotion of Youth Employment in Mauritania.

The *EUROSociAL+* programme, also implemented by FIIAPP, contributed to the definition of measures (profiling, intermediation, training, etc.) for the labour inclusion of migrant workers, with special attention to reducing discrimination and violence. In addition, it accompanied the Inter-American Association of Public Defenders in the design of a regional model of legal assistance to people in the context of human mobility in Latin America, and the creation of a regional network. Specifically, support is provided to the Inter-American Network for the Defence of Persons in the Context of Mobility, whose objective is to improve legal guidance and assistance, guaranteeing access to basic rights and services such as education, health, housing and employment. Other actions have also focused on the construction of methodological tools to apply an intercultural approach to social programmes, such as those managed by the Solidarity and Social Investment Fund in Chile (particularly in territories with a diverse migrant population).

#### **d. Transparency and truthful, objective and reliable information**

The MISSM in turn contributes to promoting regular, orderly and safe migration channels through platforms and channels providing accurate and up-to-date information on the different regular, orderly and safe migration pathways available for migrating to Spain.

Specifically, the MISSM has a website (<https://www.inclusion.gob.es>), updated in 2023, where, in a clear and concise manner, the relevant information appears so that the interested party has the necessary tools to know the ways available to come to Spain in a regular and safe manner. All the information on the different types of stay, residence and/or work authorisations that exist can be consulted on the website. Official application forms for the initiation of immigration procedures and others for different



communications with the administration can be downloaded. The website also includes a brief questionnaire that allows the interested party to find out what possibilities they have of working and living in Spain.

In general, the interested party may complete the procedures:

- Either in person before the competent bodies for processing, or,
- electronically in all the procedures that are available through the website of the Ministry of Territorial Policy (<https://sede.administracionespublicas.gob.es/>), commonly known as the Mercurio platform.

In addition, there are other sections on the website containing the applicable regulations and instructions and various information, such as the contacts of the different Immigration Offices.

All these resources are regularly updated in accordance with existing regulations and instructions, in order to achieve an efficient and orderly migration process. In doing so, the MISSM contributes permanently and substantially to the transmission of truthful, objective and reliable information on the size and characteristics of the migrant population in Spain, and its changes over time, with a known methodology. It also prepares dissemination notes that contribute to the understanding of the migratory phenomenon and the migrant population in our country from different angles. The best expression of this task of are the *Indicators by Nationality*, which group together in a single tool the statistical information published by any organisation regarding migrants of a specific nationality in Spain. Thus, all the official information available on the group can be accessed at the click of a button.<sup>5</sup>

This information provided by the MISSM is complemented by that offered by the MIR and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, EU and Cooperation (MAUC). Indeed, the MIR also disseminates useful information about legal migration to Spain through downloadable brochures and information on its website.<sup>6</sup> As regards the MAUC, in addition to the information on visa procedures and other services contained on its website,<sup>7</sup> information campaigns are frequently carried out through the social networks of the representations abroad.

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<sup>5</sup> [https://www.inclusion.gob.es/web/opi/estadisticas/productos\\_servicios/indicadores\\_nacionalidad](https://www.inclusion.gob.es/web/opi/estadisticas/productos_servicios/indicadores_nacionalidad).

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.interior.gob.es/opencms/es/servicios-al-ciudadano/tramites-y-gestiones/extranjeria/>.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.exteriores.gob.es/es/ServiciosAlCiudadano/Paginas/Servicios-consulares.aspx>.



On the other hand, the Directorate General for Migration (MISSM) is responsible for providing external and internal training to its staff, including that of the Immigration Offices, in order to enable them to carry out an efficient management of the procedures, as well as to advise the foreigner concerned on the actions or formalities to be followed in the administrative procedure for aliens in question.

Specifically, this Directorate General has participated in the delivery of training talks organised by the Ministry of Finance and Public Function, addressed to officials of the State administration who are in contact with migrants, as well as in informative talks to civil society on different ways of legal access to Spain.

In the field of the EMN, the MISSM has increased its commitment to collect and consolidate information through the coordination exercised as National Contact Point of the Network in Spain by the Secretariat of State for Migration. Thus, it will develop the obligations arising from the Network's Work Programme 2023-2025:

- Maximise the added value of the Network by making statistical data available in the field of migration, integration and statelessness and by facilitating operational collaboration.
- Improve the comparability of statistics through enhanced cooperation with Eurostat for the preparation of the statistical annex to the Network's annual report on migration and asylum.
- Address asylum and migration challenges by supporting, where necessary, preparedness efforts and the Migration Preparedness Network and Crisis Plan.
- Contribute to the development of EU migration policies encompassing new technologies, new legal avenues to meet labour market needs, new narratives and new governance.
- Collaborate in the design of innovative instruments to facilitate talent attraction to the EU.

The statistical work of the MISSM is complemented by its active contribution to international forums for the exchange and analysis of migration statistics. These forums include, in addition to the EMN, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in Europe (OECD). The Deputy Directorate of Migration Analysis has collaborated intensively with the OECD's Migration Division to improve the international comparability of migration statistics, adjusting the classifications of existing residence permits in the different states to a single, informed typology, which allows for comparative analysis with neighbouring countries. Likewise, that same Unit has been in



permanent contact with the OECD since the beginning of the war in Ukraine to promote real-time statistical monitoring of the flow of displaced persons generated by the Russian invasion, and of the reception management of these displaced persons. In fact, the OECD has expressly commended the MISSM for the design of a real-time information collection system that was instrumental in the successful management of the emergency in the peak months. The information resulting from this exercise is published on the Ministry's website and feeds the coordination with the other Ministries involved in the management.<sup>8</sup>

Furthermore, the EMN produces an annual report on the main policy, legislative and management measures on migration and asylum adopted in its member countries. On the basis of these national reports, the Commission draws up a report (synthesis report) compiling the measures adopted by the Member States and an executive summary (flash report) containing the main lines and conclusions of the report.

The EMN also conducts several thematic studies each year that provide a comparative analysis on migration and asylum issues of particular interest. For this purpose, a common format is used, which is completed by the different member countries of the Network. These studies allow for a more in-depth analysis on very specific issues and draw conclusions on the different policies or good practices carried out in each Member State.<sup>9</sup>

The EMN Country Fact Sheets, produced on an annual basis as well, provide a summary of the most important developments in migration and asylum in each participating State, in addition to the most recent statistics on migration and asylum. This information is taken from the annual report produced by each Contact Point.

As a member of the OECD, Spain prepares, within the framework of the OECD Migration Expert Group, an annual report (SOPEMI) which reflects the main advances and developments in Spanish migration and international protection policy during the previous year. This report includes an important statistical analysis section prepared by the Permanent Immigration Observatory, which allows for an analysis of the evolution of migratory flows and characterises the foreign population in Spain. The study contributes to the OECD's *International Migration Outlook*.

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<sup>8</sup> Some of the results are available at [https://public.tableau.com/views/ucrania\\_16490687789290/ucrania\\_cifras?%3AshowVizHome=no&%3Aembed=true#1](https://public.tableau.com/views/ucrania_16490687789290/ucrania_cifras?%3AshowVizHome=no&%3Aembed=true#1) and here <https://www.inclusion.gob.es/web/opi/estadisticas/catalogo/ucranianos>.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.emnspain.gob.es/>.



In compliance with the Work Programme approved by the European Commission, the MISSM is implementing a communication and dissemination strategy through its recently updated website, as well as through social networks such as LinkedIn, X or Youtube. The aim is to disseminate more widely the studies, reports and analyses produced within the framework of the EMN, as well as to contribute to the establishment of a solid network of contacts in the field of migration. In short, the MISSM will maintain and strengthen its commitment as an integral part of the EMN by contributing to the creation and dissemination of accurate and transparent information. Similarly, the Deputy Directorate of Analysis of the Secretariat of State for Migration has participated, as part of its collaboration with Eurostat, to comply with Spain's obligations in the field of migration statistics, in the preparation of pilot studies on applications and refusals of residence authorisations, with excellent results. In recent years, it has worked to improve the quality and dissemination of the statistics produced for international comparability purposes, as well as the construction of consistent historical series.

Similarly, the MAUC acts as a focal point for the collection of data that is subsequently fed into the Valletta Joint Action Plan Database. Through this database, JVAP State Parties share information with a view to developing evidence-based policies. In addition, the possibility of opening this database to academia for technical analysis, reporting and statistics is currently being considered.

On the other hand, the MISSM, through the Deputy Directorate of Migration Analysis, is working intensively to generate, compile, disseminate and monitor highly disaggregated statistics on the migrant population, organised according to their legal status, and enriched with information, for example, on their employment situation in the country.<sup>10</sup>

The MIR also compiles data disaggregated by sex, place of arrival in the national territory, age of minority and nationality, with the aim of informing the policies of the administrations. Data related to irregular immigration, as well as those obtained in applications for international protection, allow Spain to fulfil this commitment. Although initially, provenance and nationality are estimates, based on immigrants' own declarations and other factors, the data are subsequently verified by other means.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.inclusion.gob.es/web/opi/estadisticas>.



These data collected by the MIR serve as the basis for the subsequent preparation of reports and statistics with different levels of disaggregation, which are also accessible to the general public through the following links: <https://www.interior.gob.es/opencms/es/prensa/balances-e-informes/> and <https://proteccion-asilo.interior.gob.es/es/datos-e-informacion-estadistica/publicaciones/>. Annual reports on migration and international protection are published as well.

**e. Elimination of adverse and structural factors that prevent people from creating and maintaining sustainable livelihoods and fulfilling their personal aspirations and tackling the root causes of migration**

In Spain, a Minimum Living Income, which allows all those with an income below a certain threshold, or with no income at all, to benefit from state support, was introduced in 2020. This benefit is not limited to Spanish citizens, but is also available to migrants who are in Spain and meet the stipulated requirements.

With regard to other countries, Spain is also committed, through its agencies, to combating the factors that drive people to emigrate against their will, i.e. the root causes of migration. There are many and varied projects implemented by Spanish agencies, particularly by FIIAPP, which have this ultimate objective. Below, we will outline some of them, which seek fundamentally to improve the living conditions of the population most prone to emigrate - the youngest - and to strengthen national labour markets, among others.

The *Strengthening Youth Governance and Inclusion in Morocco* project (2023-2024), funded by the EU and implemented by FIIAPP, promotes the resolution of the specific challenges faced by young people in the country, encouraging their participation in society and providing opportunities for their personal and professional development. It seeks to promote inclusive and adapted post-pandemic measures, covering areas such as education, training, employment, health, housing and mobility. Within this framework, it seeks to strengthen governance mechanisms in various ministerial departments related to youth, such as the promotion of employability, a key element in the insertion and integration of young migrants. It offers guidance, training and technical support to facilitate the labour integration of young people and to address problems such as job insecurity and difficulties in becoming independent.





The *EU4YOUTH Tunisia* (2022-2027) project, funded by the EU and implemented by FIIAPP and AECID, in addition to the British Council, carried out the *Maghroum'IN* ("passionate" in Arabic) initiative to promote the inclusion and participation of Tunisian youth in vulnerable situations in public life. Through local creativity, culture and sport, this project addresses various forms of exclusion affecting young people by providing opportunities for artistic expression, cultural development and social participation. The programme supports innovative processes that facilitate the access of vulnerable young people to alternative training for employment in the cultural and sports sectors, through "Workshop School" initiatives. These initiatives provide models that enable young people who have dropped out of formal training to acquire professional skills in fields related to culture and sport.

The third phase of the *SOCIEUX* project (2020-2024) (*EU Facility for Employment, Labour and Social Protection*), funded by the EU and co-implemented by FIIAPP, plays a crucial role in strengthening the capacities of low- and middle-income countries in Latin America, Africa and the Mediterranean in key areas such as social protection, labour and employment. Through cross-cutting approaches, the project works to address specific challenges, including the inclusion of women and persons with disabilities.

In the framework of the transition programme between phases of *EUROSociAL+*, *EUROSociAL Bridge* (2023-2024), financed by the EU and co-implemented by FIIAPP, support is being provided to the Chilean Ministry of Justice in the implementation of its new National Youth Social Reintegration Service, in which migration status is understood as a specific and obligatory variable when planning an intervention. In the framework of *EUROSociAL+*, an action was also carried out (in complementarity with the *EUROFRONT* programme) aimed at the creation of a cross-border strategy for the security, governance and development of the Lake Titicaca region, on the Bolivia-Peru border. This strategy was designed to strengthen governance structures (the Binational Autonomous Authority) and the economic and social development of the region.

The *EU4Equity* project in Mexico (2023-2027), funded by the EU and co-implemented by FIIAPP, which intends to improve efficiency in the collection and allocation of public resources, supports initiatives aimed at promoting the formalisation of companies and workers through the application of mechanisms related to taxes, employment and social contributions. The goal is to widen the fiscal space in Mexico and, consequently, to reduce the levels of informal employment and ensure decent working conditions.



**f. Improvement and diversification of the pathways available for safe, orderly and regular migration**

The Government of Spain is committed to safe, orderly and regular migration as an indispensable element for strengthening the external dimension and relations with third countries. To this end, it is essential to establish agile, renewed mechanisms adapted to the current migratory reality that also contribute to preventing irregular migration, loss of life and recourse to exploitation, smuggling and trafficking networks; promote the matching of migrants' skills and competences with the needs of the labour market, cushioning the ageing of our societies and preventing phenomena such as overqualification and brain drain; and promote the reintegration component to favour the migrant, the country of origin and the country of destination under the principle of mutual trust, in a triple win relationship.

The MISSM is the department responsible for the design of safe, orderly and regular migration channels, following an analysis of the current situation and European and national legislation. In this regard, in the last two years a series of regulatory reforms have been implemented in the area of immigration:

The aforementioned reform of Royal Decree 557/2011, of 20 April, approving the Regulation of Organic Law 4/2000 on the rights and freedoms of foreigners in Spain and their social integration, following its reform by Organic Law 2/2009, has been implemented.

Law 14/2013, of 27 September, on support for entrepreneurs and their internationalisation, which aims to attract and retain talent, has also been amended, including the following improvements:

- Extension of the duration of authorisations from 2 to 3 years in order to reduce bureaucratic hurdles, so that the initial authorisation is valid for 3 years and the renewal for 2. Thus, after 5 years, if the holder meets the statutory requirements, he can apply for a long-term authorisation. In contrast, until now the authorisations were valid for 2 years, which meant that immigrants had to go three times to the competent unit to apply for and/or renew their authorisation.
- Extension of the scope of the national scheme for the attraction of highly qualified professionals to graduates with vocational training, also eliminating the size and turnover requirements that companies had to meet in order to apply for this type



of authorisations. This facilitates the incorporation of highly qualified professionals in all companies, regardless of their size or turnover.

- Introduction of a new migratory category: the international teleworker or digital nomad.
- Transposition of Directive (EU) 2021/1883 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 October 2021 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of highly qualified employment and repealing Council Directive 2009/50/EC.

In addition, work has continued on identifying possible regulatory improvements that would have an impact on strengthening legal migration channels. An example of this would be the adoption of instructions by Council of Ministers Agreement determining the procedure for the entry and stay of third-country nationals working in the audiovisual sector. The aim is to facilitate the entry and stay of professionals in this sector with the objective of responding to their needs, providing a legal migration channel adapted to their particular characteristics.

The national momentum of legal migration policies has been reflected, on the other hand, in the scope of the Spanish EU Presidency programme. In this regard, the negotiations of the two legislative instruments on legal migration incorporated in the European Commission's Communication of 27 April 2022 on Skills and Talent have been promoted: reform of the Single Permit Directive and reform of the Long-Term Residence Directive.

Also at the European level, the MISSM is participating in an initiative to design an EU Talent Pool, based on the feasibility study and the elements provided by the OECD, an international organisation with accredited experience in this field. Spain has always shown its willingness to discuss and participate in this experience, in the conviction that it can help to promote real knowledge and better use of the existing pathways for safe, orderly and regular migration, both at the European and national levels, as well as to foster knowledge of the profiles of potential candidates to emigrate to the EU who may have the necessary academic and professional skills and experience, both of which are increasingly in demand by companies.

Finally, in the area of projects aimed at strengthening the external dimension and the opening of safe, orderly and regular channels, Spain is participating in the strategic framework of the EU Talent Partnerships as a formula for promoting a comprehensive migration dialogue with third countries. The MISSM has participated in this framework



along the lines that Spain has always defended: a balanced narrative within the comprehensive approach to migration; avoiding the brain drain; contributing to tackling the root causes of non-voluntary migration; and listening to the needs of countries of origin.

Under these premises, and both bilaterally and in the European framework, the MISSM has developed several pilot projects on regular migration, which are consolidated as good practice, in which institutional capacities and knowledge are developed in a way that benefits the country of origin.

Hence, in the area of improving useful information on - and thus accessibility to - existing legal migration channels, the MISSM is working on a project within the framework of the European Commission's Immigration Liaison Officers Network, whose biennial work programme includes as one of its priorities improving knowledge of legal migration pathways by European consulates and competent local authorities in third countries, as well as by the liaison officers themselves. The project, called *MigraSafe*, is co-funded by the EU and Spain, and is implemented by FIIAPP and IOM in eight African states: Cape Verde, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal and Tunisia. The duration of the project is 24 months (from early 2022 to early 2024). In addition, three other European States (Portugal, Sweden and Switzerland) have participated in this project by providing subject matter experts and field staff support to the project.

*MigraSafe* has assessed through various surveys and questionnaires addressed to European and African officials their knowledge of the EU's regulation of regular migration pathways and their learning priorities in this field. In particular, it conducted trainings in African countries on legal channels of access to the EU, in particular on the content of the Directives on regular migration. The trainings targeted civil servants and civil society organisations directly involved in various stages of migration, e.g. for the examination and settlement of visa applications, in the case of consular staff of European Embassies; or for advising migrants on their rights and obligations in the EU, in the case of civil society organisations and national authorities. One of the main objectives of this capacity building of various actors in the migration field has been to encourage the use of regular migration pathways, creating more opportunities for safe channels and avoiding those implying increased exposure to vulnerabilities in migration.

In addition to that, in order to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration channels, and to foster dialogue with our partners, under a triple win approach and under the principle of mutual trust, the *Women as financially independent rural actors* project



(WAFIRA) has been launched. It is a pilot Project on legal Migration with Morocco financed by the EU through the *Migration Partnership Facility (MPF)*. The project consists of training 250 seasonal women in the framework of the *GECCO* circular migration programme, so that on their return to Morocco they can start up income-generating activities thanks to the financial and technical support that the project offers them.

Also, from the implementation perspective of the GCM, and in order to promote safe, orderly and regular migration channels, Spain fosters the signing of Migration Flow Agreements with other countries. In 2022 and 2023, agreements of this type were concluded with Honduras and Guatemala. These agreements subsequently translate into collective recruitment projects at origin, through circular migration projects in different sectors with insufficient workers (e.g, agriculture).

It should also be noted that on 3 May 2023 a trilateral declaration was issued between the United States, Canada and Spain on the commitment to promote safe, humane, orderly and regular migration through labour migration opportunities for Northern Central America. Specifically, in this declaration, Spain commits to strengthening existing regular channels, expanding its circular migration programme and developing complementary channels for people in need of international protection (in addition to those arriving through UNHCR referral).

As a result of this declaration, the Council of Ministers approved the extension of the National Resettlement Plan with the pledge to open a complementary and additional channel to authorise the arrival of refugees, preferably from Central and South America, whose profiles are determined according to their capacity for integration into Spanish society based on their employability. For the implementation of the complementary pathways to resettlement, it is necessary to count on those companies in Spain ("sponsors") that contemplate the opportunity to address their staff shortages by hiring refugees transferred to Spain. The sponsoring companies acquire the main commitment to offer an employment contract to the refugees who arrive in Spain through this channel and who will have been previously selected according to professional criteria.

In line with this, a pilot project has been set up to resettle Nicaraguan nationals and refugees from Costa Rica in the province of Valladolid. Through this pilot project, 24 families have moved to Spain and 28 people are in the process of training/signing employment contracts.



On the other hand, by 2024 and 2025, 500 and 1,000 people respectively are expected to benefit from this labour pathway.

Finally, it is worth noting that the *VI Development Cooperation and Global Solidarity Plan* is currently at an advanced stage of preparation at the MAUC. The draft includes the need to integrate migrants seeking their first work experience, generating new avenues for entrepreneurship. Similarly, the integration of the women's group as a main actor in the dynamics of development is a constant throughout the document.

#### **g. Cooperation for a return in dignity and safety**

The Spanish strategy includes the development of voluntary return and reintegration projects managed by NGOs and international organisations specialised in the care of migrants, such as the IOM.

There are currently two types of assisted voluntary return and reintegration projects eligible for funding: Assisted Voluntary Return and Productive Voluntary Return.

The main objective of both of them is to facilitate the possibility for third-country nationals in a situation of special vulnerability to return voluntarily from Spain to their countries of origin through individualised return and reintegration itineraries. The productive voluntary return project includes a business project associated with the comeback.

Sometimes, however, it is impossible to carry out these voluntary returns. In the case of forced returns, cooperation with partner countries is crucial. In this sense, the FCSE work to improve and promote the coordination of investigations and actively cooperate to strengthen bilateral relations, as it is important to maintain and promote communications to assess and plan return operations, always in conditions of dignity and security.

In order to verify that returns, of any kind, take place under these conditions, the involvement of external monitoring mechanisms is enhanced. Specifically, this is done through the communication of all flights coordinated by FRONTEX to the Ombudsman's office, so that it can assess its participation *in situ*. In addition to its intervention in numerous flights, it has developed on-site supervision of the reception of returnees and their pre-flight documentation at the airport facilities. Upon request, the flight



documentation is sent to the office, as well as replies to the reports with considerations and recommendations on the various supervised elements.

#### **h. Facilitation of mutual recognition of migrants' formally and informally acquired skills and competences**

Spain continues to work in the promotion of the mutual recognition of skills and competences. Thus, the MISSM has fulfilled its mandate to transpose the EU Blue Card Directive, which regulates the migration scheme for the issuance of residence and work permits for third-country nationals for the purpose of highly skilled employment in the EU, compatible in turn with national schemes for highly skilled migration.

For its part, FIIAPP, within the framework of the aforementioned *EUROSociAL+* programme, has supported actions conceived to make regulatory adjustments to facilitate channelled flows in the demand-supply system; the certification and recognition of the skills of migrant workers (already resident and potential) both in destination countries and in multinational spaces (through agreements between national certification systems); or migrants' access to training and updating of skills, deconstructing the allocations between jobs "for men" and "for women"; and the recognition of the skills of migrant workers (already resident and potential) both in destination countries and in multinational spaces (by means of agreements among national certification systems).

#### **i. Providing migrants with access to basic services**

In 2022, following the outbreak of the humanitarian crisis caused by the war in Ukraine, the MISSM organised the assistance and reception of displaced persons from Ukraine through the International and Temporary Protection Reception System. Likewise, the 4 aforementioned CREADEs located in Madrid, Barcelona, Malaga and Alicante have been opened for the reception and initial assistance of displaced persons from Ukraine. They have accommodation places in the centres themselves and facilitate the temporary protection (TP) in less than 24 hours. The TP grants residence and work permits and immediate access to Spanish social services, as well as the provision of support for labour integration, protection and guidance for vulnerable minors, etc.

Similarly, the MISSM is involved in several of the components of the *Recovery, Transformation and Resilience Plan* (PRTR). Specifically, the creation of new Reception Centres is framed within Component 22, Investment 5, which will allow for the reform



of the *State Model of Humanitarian Reception and International Protection*, guaranteeing reception capacity in accordance with current and future needs and increasing its efficiency. The reforms and investments of the PRTR will contribute to building a solid National Reception System able to eliminating waiting lists, adapting benefits according to vulnerability and maximising the inclusion capacity of the accompaniment itineraries implemented by the Spanish regions.

To this end, the necessary steps and actions are being taken to proceed with the construction and/or refurbishment of 10 to 15 new migration centres throughout the country, following a territorial distribution criterion.

Regarding the funding model, Title V of Royal Decree 220/2022, of 29 March, which approves the Regulations governing the reception system for international protection, includes the management of the reception system by means of concerted action. This is the instrument through which authorisation is granted to those entities that meet the conditions established by regulation for the provision of reception services that fall within the competence of the MISSM. For its part, Order ISM/680/2022 of 19 July, which develops the management of the international protection reception system by means of concerted action, is responsible for the development of this management system, both for international protection and humanitarian assistance.

This reform of the management model allows for increased efficiency in the provision of reception services through a new model of collaboration with entities. This model is complementary to the reception services managed by the MISSM, both directly and indirectly through contractual formulas, as well as to those others that are available on an exceptional basis to address situations of urgent need and circumstances of vulnerability.

The concerted action model overcomes some of the limitations of the previous subsidy system. Thus, prior planning of the system's needs allows for the granting of an authorisation to any entity that meets the established requirements for the provision of reception services for a period of up to four years. In this way, a multi-year vision of the system is promoted, increasing its stability and predictability.

**j. Fight against irregular migration, mafias and smugglers, who endanger the lives of migrants**





Combating irregular migration, while developing legal migration routes, is also a duty, insofar as the vast majority of migrants who use these routes do so by placing themselves in the hands of mafias and human traffickers, who take advantage of the state of need and desperation of many people to make a profit. In many cases, moreover, and particularly in the migratory routes that affect Spain (the Atlantic and Western Mediterranean routes), the risk of loss of lives is very high. The reduction of these flows necessarily implies a decrease in the number of people who die along the way.

For this reason, the FCSE not only carry out, within the framework of their respective competences, effective border surveillance and inspection tasks, but also develop a strategy of preventive cooperation with the countries of origin and transit of irregular migration, which seems the most effective strategy for reducing irregular immigration flows. This collaboration is particularly intense with Morocco, Mauritania, Senegal and Gambia, the main departure countries for migrants who risk their lives on the Atlantic and Western Mediterranean routes. The main objective of this collaboration is precisely the fight against human trafficking and human smuggling networks

It is also worth recalling the efforts made during the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the EU to defend this preventive model in all relevant forums: Justice and Home Affairs Councils, SCIFA, EMWP, MOCADDEM, etc.

Among the actions carried out to foster relations with the main countries of origin of victims trafficked to Spain, the following are worth mentioning:

- Establishment of Joint Investigation Teams (JITs), which allow for the exchange of information through police liaisons for the proper development of investigations with different countries of origin/destination of trafficking, achieving common objectives, verifying the existence of the crime and ensuring the protection of victims after their identification.
- Joint Operational Actions between different police forces for the prevention of trafficking in human beings, highlighting Operational Action 8.5, on trafficking in human beings in North Africa.
- Participation in various international police forums, which promote the exchange of information and good practices among their participants. An example of this is the *EMPACT* platform (*European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Crime Threats*), in which, within the priority of human trafficking, Guardia Civil is the leader of Operational Action 7.1, on raising awareness of labour trafficking. In



2024-2025, it will also be co-leader of seven other Operational Actions, and participant in most of the remaining ones, up to a total of eighteen.

To give a few examples, in Morocco, FIIAPP and the MIR, through Guardia Civil, are implementing an EU-funded project between 2019 and 2025 to strengthen the capacities of institutions in border surveillance and integrated border management.

FIIAPP, for its part, in collaboration with Policía Nacional, is leading the EU-funded *A-TIPSOM* project to combat human trafficking and irregular migration in Nigeria (2018-2024). In this context, it has contributed to improving the Nigerian Government's capacity to address human trafficking with a special focus on women and children, who are the main victims. A common database for investigation and collaboration on this issue among the main law enforcement agencies in Nigeria has been put in place.

In Bolivia, together with the Ministries of Justice and Interior and the Ombudsman, FIIAPP implements the project *European Support to Special Anti-Drug Forces in Law Enforcement. Bridge Phase 2021-2024*, funded by the EU, with a component on combating trafficking and smuggling of human beings as a related crime. Coordination has taken place with the Departmental Councils for the fight against human trafficking and smuggling in the socialisation of the *Single Specialised Protocol* for the care of victims of human trafficking and smuggling. The project also includes a component for the coordination of border actions with the prosecutors' offices and police of Argentina, Peru and Brazil in cooperation with the Bolivian prosecutors' offices and police, designing practical guides for border actions aimed at reinforcing land border control in relation to the crimes of human trafficking and smuggling of migrants. These actions have also been coordinated with the *EUROFRONT* programme.

The aforementioned *EUROSociAL+* programme included support for an action aimed at tackling corruption as a facilitator of criminal trafficking networks (which affect poor migrant women to a greater extent). To this end, a working group was set up with the Ibero-American Association of Public Prosecutors' Offices and the Network of Prosecutors against Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants. Likewise, support was provided to the Inter-American Association of Public Defenders in the development of a regional model of legal assistance to migrants and in the creation of an Inter-American Network for the Defence of Persons in the Context of Mobility. This network serves as a platform for the exchange of information at the request of the countries and as a space for experience-sharing. It has been of vital importance due to the Venezuelan



migratory flow in recent years, which required urgent responses in neighbouring countries.

It is worth highlighting the existence of the aforementioned *PENTRA*, which has been in force for three years (2021-2023). In 2024, *PENTRA* will undergo a thorough evaluation, identifying good practices and areas for improvement for future plans in this area. In addition to this final evaluation, during 2022 and 2023, a permanent working group made up of representatives of all the bodies involved, including civil society organisations specialised in trafficking, participated in the continuous monitoring of the actions developed for the fulfilment of its measures.

With regard to the training of agents, the FCSE have carried out different actions over the last year. For example, the XIII Conference for Investigators of Human Trafficking Crimes, in which 60 members of Guardia Civil met to promote investigations into this type of crime and improve their effectiveness, addressing regulatory and procedural issues, cooperation protocols among the different actors, legislative and jurisprudential aspects, updating investigation techniques and methods, as well as the new criminal methodologies that affect this criminal activity. Specific workshops have also been held for the social partners in the field of human trafficking.

Within the online training sessions, agents receive lessons on the investigation of human trafficking crimes. One of the modules focuses on the assessment, detection and referral of possible victims to social entities, offering them protection at all times and ensuring their rights.

Also noteworthy is the organisation by Guardia Civil, together with the Carlos III University of Madrid, of the 3<sup>rd</sup> University Expert Course on Violence against Women, in November 2023. The course was attended by 36 students, including not only members of Guardia Civil, but also members of the judiciary, NGOs, the Public Prosecutor's Office, the Secretary of State for Security and personnel from police forces in Romania and Colombia, allowing all these professionals to engage in dialogue and debate on the problem from different perspectives.

In addition, as complementary training, a tele-training course on human trafficking is organised every year, accessible online through the corporate intranet for all Guardia Civil and Policía Nacional personnel.



For its part, the Centre for Intelligence against Terrorism and Organised Crime (CITCO) has participated in several training activities on human trafficking for the FCSE, sending both speakers and trainees, thus promoting the continuous training necessary to address the changing reality of human trafficking.

Another of the main elements of action has been to promote the creation of the aforementioned JITs and Joint Operational Partnerships (JOPs), which are essential to better fight human trafficking and migrant smuggling in Mauritania, Senegal and Niger. These actions, implemented by FIIAPP, are intended to strengthen the operational capacities of the units involved in the collection, analysis and communication of information on these crimes, and to reinforce the idea that operational, judicial police and intelligence services must always work together and in coordination. Likewise, Policía Nacional, through FIIAPP, has participated as the main partner in the project to establish the NETCOP coordination network (first and second phases) between joint police teams against trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants in West and Central Africa.

Training, as we have seen, is not limited to Spanish officers: courses are also offered to police personnel from other countries. In this regard, and on an annual basis, the FCSE selects a number of countries of origin and transit to provide training both in the general international cooperation programme and in the framework of EU projects and other institutions.

At the EU level, different members of Policía Nacional and Guardia Civil participated in the presentation of good practices as experts in the CEPOL course on labour exploitation, aimed at Member States' law enforcement specialists in the field of trafficking in human beings.

Besides, FIIAPP plays a leading role in other EU-funded technical cooperation projects to strengthen general security issues, some of which have specifically addressed the fight against migrant smuggling crimes. Among these projects, some stand out, such as *EUROFRONT (Integrated Border Management in Latin America, 2020-2024)*, *Prometheus II* in Georgia (2022-2025), *SENSEC-EU* for internal security in Senegal (2017-2021) and the aforementioned *GAR-SI* in six countries of the Sahel.

FIIAPP, in collaboration with the IOM, implements the EU-funded *Multi-Country Border Security* programme in Haiti, Jamaica and the Dominican Republic (2020-2024), aimed



at improving integrated border management, information exchange and investigation skills with a special focus on their application in the fight against human trafficking.

Likewise, CITCO actively collaborates with EUROPOL, making the national contribution to the EU Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment Report (SOCTA) prepared by this agency, which considers, among other criminal activities, the smuggling of migrants.

The FCSE, on the other hand, intensify the exchange of information and meetings with other States, among others, in the framework of the *Programme of Assistance against Transnational Organised Crime (PAcCTO)*, with the aim of learning about the situation and experience of other countries. This exchange serves as an analysis for the prevention and/or early detection of crimes related to trafficking and smuggling of migrants. For example, with the participation of FIIAPP, Bolivia has received support for the implementation of the *Single Protocol for the care of victims of trafficking* and the formalisation of an intervention route to improve their protection and avoid re-victimisation processes. The Protocol has contributed to strengthening intelligence and investigation systems to help dismantle criminal organisations involved in human trafficking.

In this context, the FCSE also promote the creation of joint strategies, coordinating and cooperating with other relevant actors in the fight against human trafficking, always with the goal of reversing the threats posed by this phenomenon. Examples include FIIAPP's leadership in a study visit to Spain with the police forces of Haiti, Jamaica and the Dominican Republic to enhance, through the exchange of experiences and best practices, the training programmes of the police forces of the three countries; as well as the visits and exchanges of experiences carried out with Guardia Civil Academy in Baeza.

Similarly, in order to foster the participation of the FCSE in training activities, the *Regional Manual for the Investigation of Human Trafficking Cases* has been created within the *PAcCTO*. The *Manual* intends to increase the skills of police officers for the prevention of violence against women and gender-based violence and, in particular, one of its main criminal manifestations: human trafficking. To this end, the objective is to provide police officers with the knowledge and mastery of sufficient methods and techniques for the investigation of the crime of trafficking in persons.

Spain also participates regularly in the meetings of the European Network of National Rapporteurs or equivalent mechanisms on trafficking in human beings in the EU, which convene twice a year and are organized by the EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator.



Finally, it should be noted that in the framework of the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the EU, a meeting was chaired on 6 and 7 November 2023, the main theme of which was the implementation of Directive 2011/36 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, and the online dimension of trafficking in human beings.

#### **k. Improvement of search and rescue activities**

It is vital to protect those who try to go across the sea in search for a better life, even at the risk of death. To this end, the overhaul introduced in the Maritime Border Surveillance and Control System (SIVE) Estrecho, Faro de la Mola (Formentera), Guinate (Lanzarote), as well as various projects for the continuous improvement of the material and technological equipment of Guardia Civil units involved in rescue and border surveillance, stand out.

At the national level, in 2022, Salvamento Marítimo coordinated the rescue, assistance or search of 39,594 people (an average of 108 per day, a decrease of 14% compared to the average in 2021). These people were involved in different types of emergencies such as sinkings, fires, strandings or falls into the water from land, etc.

Of the 39,594 people assisted in 2022, 19,373 people were rescued in emergencies related to irregular immigration (a 24% decrease compared to 2021, when 25,527 people were rescued from precarious vessels).

In 2023, Salvamento Marítimo assisted a total of 61,824 people in its actions. In the area of immigration, Salvamento Marítimo coordinated the search of 1,239 precarious vessels and rescued 26,521 people (37% more than the previous year).

Regarding bilateral cooperation between Spain and other countries in the area of search and rescue (SAR), Guardia Civil holds regular meetings with the General Staffs of the Moroccan Royal Gendarmerie (GRM) and the Algerian National Coastguard Service (SNGC).

Within the EU, Guardia Civil actively contributes to SAR operations by providing technical and human resources, under the umbrella of operations undertaken carried both on a bilateral basis and with Frontex (*J.O. Indalo* and *J.O. Minerva*), as well as abroad, in the framework of other Frontex Joint Operations.



It is also worth highlighting the project *Support to Maritime Security in Mauritania* (2020-2023), funded by the EU and implemented by FIIAPP, in collaboration with the MIR through Guardia Civil) and the Directorate General of the Merchant Fleet. Its objective was to strengthen the capacity and coordination of the Mauritanian forces in charge of rescue and maritime surveillance, in particular the coastguard and the national gendarmerie.

### **3. List some examples of promising practices and lessons learned that relate to inter- and cross-regional collaboration**

Spain's record of accomplishment in this area includes different aspects of relevance, both in terms of good practices and lessons learned. First, Spain has launched several pilot projects with third countries that have been a success in terms of cooperation. Under a win-win approach and on the basis of the principle of mutual trust, it is necessary to underscore the success of the circular migration programmes that Spain has been developing for years with Morocco. The *GECCO* and *WAFIRA* programmes bring thousands of Moroccans to Spain every year to work in the agricultural sector (currently 16,000, including a large number of women who come to Spain to pick berries). In addition to finding work, participants in the programme receive specific training in the sector, allowing them to put into practice the knowledge acquired in their country of origin. Since the inception of both programmes, the practice has been refined and perfected. In this process, Spain has successfully strengthened the Moroccan National Employment Agency (ANAPEC), which is responsible for the selection of participants in the programme at source. The return rate at the end of the programme is practically 100%, and the people selected are indeed farmers and peasants. The success of these programmes is such that they are considered models for Spain, and are being replicated in other countries (there are currently other initiatives, albeit more recent, with countries such as Senegal, Honduras and Guatemala).

In addition to cooperating through projects and agreements, Spain actively participates in events, meetings and conferences with EU Member States and third countries to promote safe, orderly and regular migration channels, based on the conviction that cooperation is the key to success and that it is necessary to listen to all parties involved in order to obtain satisfactory results for all.

Thus, the Secretariat of State for Migration has organised several meetings and conferences on legal migration with third countries, such as the aforementioned



thematic meeting on legal migration within the framework of the Spanish presidency of the Rabat Process (2022), or the plenary session of the Transatlantic Migration Council, whose central theme was the construction of effective partnerships to achieve common goals in migration matters.

In a similar vein, every year, national and international conferences and events on migration and asylum-related issues are organised within the European Migration Network (EMN). They bring together experts in the field, not only from the administration, but also from other institutions, organisations or companies, hence promoting dialogue and the exchange of ideas.

In November, the above-mentioned conference of the Spanish presidency of the EMN was held in Madrid. The theme of the meeting was "Shaping the future of migration in the EU. Where we are and where we want to go". It brought together high-level speakers and experts, including Commissioners, Members of the European Parliament, Ministers from several non-EU countries, European social and economic partners, as well as representatives of the private sector.

In the area of cooperation developed by the MIR, on the other hand, it is interesting to note that the FCSE have personnel deployed in different places, and specifically in Africa, a continent with which the relationship is particularly close, working together in the exchange of information, collaboration and cooperation, all in a direct, fluid, rapid and constant manner. Many of the projects that the MIR implements in different countries to strengthen cooperation in various areas related to migration have already been mentioned. All of them, although with room for improvement, deserve also to be considered good practices.

Another excellent practice already consolidated in Spain is the celebration of consultations with the different administrative levels (whole-of-government approach) and with civil society (whole-of-society approach) on a regular basis, prior to the four-year and mid-term reviews of the implementation of the GCM. These consultations provide first-hand knowledge of how the different administrations and civil society feel about the implementation of the GCM, sharing good practices and possible solutions to challenges, which are often shared. The close collaboration with the Office of the IOM in Spain, is essential in terms of logistical and technical support for the holding of this type of meetings. In 2024, the consultations with civil society, organised by the MAUC, were held on 15 February 2024. In it, the social actors identified good practices of the





Spanish administration, such as the work in the field of SAR done by Salvamento Marítimo, which was unanimously praised by the institutions and associations present.

Moreover, on 23 February, the MISSM led the working day with the different levels of the administration. Among the good practices of the Spanish regions that were shared at the event, some can be mentioned. In the Basque Country, a Basque Social Pact on Migration has been created, which has both a preventive and reactive approach, as well as a Basque Forum on Migration and Asylum, which brings together administrations and civil society organisations and contributes to the design of regional policies on migration. In Navarra, a Plan to Combat Racism and Xenophobia is being developed. Finally, in Catalonia, a law on racism is being drafted with the participation of migrants, and a pact is being drawn up at the local level to reach a commitment not to use migration as an electoral tool.

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

Unfortunately, progress in facilitating and making the most of safe, orderly and regular migration is slow and uneven in many areas. States Parties need to redouble their efforts to develop ambitious national responses to implement the GCM. It is true, however, that there are challenges and gaps in its implementation, which may be due, in part, to limited resources and national capacities, as well as insufficient coordination within and among governments and with relevant stakeholders.

The GCM is a very broad instrument, which sets enormously ambitious goals, so the challenges in its implementation are unavoidable. As some civil society organisations pointed out at the above-mentioned meeting with the Spanish administration on 15 February, the Compact itself is a tremendous challenge. So is integrating the different international instruments that refer to migration. In this sense, several NGOs stated during the meeting that it would have been desirable, for example, for the European Pact on Migration and Asylum to include a mention of the GCM, recognising its value as the first universal instrument dealing with migration.

In terms of inter- and trans-regional collaboration, probably the biggest challenge is the existence of conflicting interests between different regions, or sometimes between different countries within the same region. Countries of origin often need the remittances sent by their diasporas as a key means of funding and therefore find it critical to keep national communities abroad; while transit countries, and especially



destination countries, are concerned about the difficulties of managing irregular migration flows into their territories.

Another problem is that protocols are often not sufficiently elaborated. If the procedure for granting visas, for returns or for accessing labour migration pathways is unclear, processes become complicated and lengthy, which is detrimental to all parties involved, particularly the migrants themselves. Related to this issue, moreover, the different administrative bodies at the domestic level are in many cases uncoordinated, rendering procedures ineffective. A concrete example of this problem is that a lot of time is often wasted in identifying focal points for the different phases of a procedure (e.g. in the case of returns). The establishment of well-structured protocols, in which the competent actors are clearly identified, is vital to overcome this difficulty.

Furthermore, migration is a multi-sectoral issue, involving internally different ministries and departments, which often have conflicting or, at least, not necessarily coherent interests. In the specific case of Spain, there is also the distribution of competences between the different administrative levels. The Spanish regions (*Comunidades Autónomas*), for example, have certain competences in the area of unaccompanied foreign minors, and their regulations in this regard may vary. Regulatory inequality, even within the countries themselves, is another challenge that hinders cooperation on migration issues.

Moreover, migration-related problems are sometimes not clearly defined, making it difficult to address them and seek appropriate solutions. An example thereof is the lack of distinction between trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants, two issues that have points in common but are of a different legal nature. Being able to clarify concepts is another necessity in order to address migration challenges effectively.

**5. 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.**

The risks associated with irregular migration, smuggling of migrants and crimes against migrants, continue to pose significant threats to human lives, and require concerted international assessment and response as much as strengthened multilateral cooperation among countries of origin, transit and destination.



In any case, there are certain pathways that can be explored which would be beneficial to all. Some of them have already been undertaken by the EU. Indeed, EU Member States are making efforts in the area of joint returns, mutual recognition of expulsion orders, etc. It would be desirable for the other countries in the UNECE region to take advantage of these synergies and align their policies with those of the EU. They would thus take advantage of the existing consensus within the Union and the consolidated efforts made over the years to push forward instruments such as the European Pact on Migration and Asylum. In a similar vein, alignment on visa policies also appears as a good path to take with the same goal.

A fluid and stable exchange of information on migration issues can also help countries to identify dynamics, anticipate developments and predict migration-related crises. In this regard, strengthened cooperation with shared databases can be extremely useful in planning the use of resources and formulating evidence-based policies. It would also be positive if countries could identify good practices and creative solutions applied by other States to situations that may be similar to those they themselves face.

Bearing in mind, moreover, that migratory flows are constant and that migratory routes are communicating vessels, seamless work in the fields of training, technology transfer and financing projects with countries of origin and transit is essential. All countries involved in the migration process (origin, transit and destination) want migration to take place in a safe, orderly and regular manner, so it is in everyone's interest to combat irregular migration. Migrants would also benefit from this cooperation since, whenever they opt for irregular migration routes, they almost always do so forced by circumstances, placing themselves in the hands of mafias and traffickers, and risking everything, including their own lives.