

IFRC STATEMENT

Europe Regional Review 2024

Intergovernmental Consultation

My name is Kirsten Hagon. I speak on behalf of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies – we are a network of 191 National Societies present around the world and working as auxiliary to governments – and we are mentioned as a key implementing partner in para 44 of the GCM. Thank you for the opportunity to share the IFRC Network's insights.

In Europe we have 52 NS, all working with migrants in some capacities, whilst 85% have specific migrant focussed programmes. We acknowledge progress in implementing GCM commitments and wish to highlight a number of critical areas for further advancement in the spirit of promoting individual and collective action.

Our inputs are especially relevant to objectives 7, 8, 15 16 and 17.

1. **First, we call for a human-centred approach consistent with humanitarian principles and international obligations.**
2. **Second, local action is foundational for GCM implementation and must be supported.** Local actors, such as National Societies are at the frontlines saving lives, promoting safety, dignity, and access to essential services for migrants, and fostering inclusion and empowerment.
3. **Third, it is essential that migrants can access safety and assistance.** Our **Humanitarian Service Point@Sea** on board the Ocean Viking ship provides healthcare and other critical support to people rescued from the Central Mediterranean Sea. **National Societies also operate Humanitarian Service Points (HSPs)** along land-based migration routes—including as part of our **Global Route Based Migration Programme**. HSPs offer a safe and welcoming space for migrants and provide information, shelter, food, healthcare, referrals and connectivity. **However, humanitarian actors can only provide these services if we have access and can create the safe spaces to provide these services. We therefore need to eliminate policies that undermine humanitarian action,** such as restrictions on obstruction and deterrence of search and rescues that prevent efforts to save lives.
4. **Finally we need the right policies in place. Our frontline action provides insights on the challenges migrants face. These are areas where more concerted efforts are needed.**
 - a. **We need to limit restrictive migration policies.** Migrants die and suffer serious harms as they cross inhospitable landscapes—mountains, polluted rivers and seas, forests, deserts—without adequate safety nets and far from medical assistance and support.
 - b. **We need to stop phone confiscations and push backs** that undermine migrant access to safety.
 - c. **We need provide dignified reception and protection services** to limit overcrowding and destitution among migrant populations and promote inclusion.

- d. **We need to reduce the barriers migrants face in accessing essential services.** These include bureaucratic hurdles, lack of awareness of services, language barriers, digital exclusion, fear, and mistrust.
- e. **We must adopt an inclusive approach to the diverse needs of migrants, regardless of their background or status.** There are too many disparities in the support provided to different migrant groups leading to inequities.
- f. **We must reverse anti-migration narratives that perpetuates stigma, discrimination, and xenophobia, undermining efforts to promote social inclusion and cohesion.**

Thank you for this opportunity to share action by the National Societies in Europe to support GCM implementation and the challenges we see based on our frontline experience and insights.