

Summary Report from Stakeholder Consultations for the UNECE region's GCM Review

Rapporteur Ms. Irem Arf, Migration Policy Advisor of International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)

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Background:

This report summarizes the responses and feedback provided by stakeholders through two multi-stakeholder consultation meetings organised by the UN Network on Migration in preparation for the [Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration \(GCM\) Regional Reviews for the UNECE Region](#) that will take place on 11 March 2024 in Geneva. An initial draft was made available online for further inputs through the Civil Society Action Committee, which are reflected in this final version. The Rapporteur also consulted and collected feedback from stakeholder groups that are not part of the Action Committee, including Global Unions.

Key Messages:

On key characteristics of the UNECE region's migration landscape

- Migration is a complex paradoxical phenomenon; often fraught with extreme dangers, risks and threats for migrant populations in search of better opportunities.
- Migration is a challenging topic that takes place in a politicized, polarized and political environment, it is intricately linked with the future of democracies in the region, also considering the many elections this year.
- The externalization of borders has led to transferring responsibility for containing migration to countries with worrying human rights records and where civil society and humanitarian actors cannot freely carry out monitoring or provide services.
- Anti-immigration policies and narratives are on the rise, while the relatively few regular pathways being created are either discriminatory or exploit migrants' labor to only 'discard' them.¹
- The expansion of temporary labor migration schemes is inappropriate and harmful in many contexts, including in response to long-term labor shortages, climate change, conflict, and other humanitarian needs.
- Regular migration pathways are being developed based on the needs of destination countries and businesses. The needs of migrants and their communities should be the basis for developing pathways.
- Europe's response to Ukrainian refugees has shown that with political will, Europe has the means to welcome refugees in an orderly, safe and rights-based manner. The same model needs to be applied to all those who are escaping poverty, war and destruction, or are simply reaching Europe in search of a decent life.
- Increasing criminalization of migration and organisations/individuals assisting migrants is not only a serious violation of human rights, but also hampers progress in many of the GCM objectives.

¹ Examples mentioned included, the proposed Talent Pool and Talent Partnerships in the EU, and temporary labor migration schemes in the US, Canada, France and UK.

- The objective of migration ‘control’ is viewed above other objectives of the GCM; in practice in many countries of the region, migration enforcement trumps the rights of migrants.²
- There are also some positive initiatives, such as those concerning the use of alternatives to detention or recent protections in the U.S. for migrant workers denouncing labor rights violations (more examples are provided in the Annex under related objectives).

On inclusion of stakeholders

- Stakeholders observe that space for civil society is shrinking in the region but also at global migration-related fora. Civil society organisations, trade unions and migrants’ organisations must be at the table when migration policies are being designed, adopted, implemented, monitored and reviewed. They appreciate UNNM’s efforts to bring in diverse voices to migration discussions, however, significant barriers remain.
- In recognition of the diversity of stakeholders and civil society, ensuring that regional reviews and the IMRF allow for a genuine exchange between a variety of stakeholders and governments is indispensable. Multistakeholder hearings with governments’ presence should be organized as integral parts of the reviews and not as separate meetings before the reviews.
- The call for social dialogue and tripartism of the GCM needs to be promoted among governments in the region.
- Freedom of association, the right to organize and collectively bargain are key for migrants to be able to advocate for their rights. These rights should be accessible in practice.

On GCM Implementation:

- Implementation of the GCM must be guided by human rights: Promote the ratification and effective implementation of the relevant UN instruments, the ILO core conventions, and the ILO migration-specific conventions, namely the UN Migrant Workers Convention, the ILO C97 Migration for Employment Convention, and ILO C143 on Migrant Workers, along with the ILO C189 Domestic Workers Convention, and the ILO C190 on Violence and Harassment.
- Rights-based indicators in line with GCM guiding principles are imperative to robustly guide the GCM review process in a comprehensive and structured way. Support UNNM’s related workstream as well as various frameworks civil society organisations are developing.³
- Lack of disaggregated data is a barrier to developing adequate policy responses, timely allocation of necessary resources and monitoring implementation. On the other hand, data collection should not risk migrants’ rights and protection.
- There is need to ensure coherence at national level through bringing together different governmental ministries and agencies. For example, when migrants engage in labor, Ministries of Labor should be involved.
- All GCM objectives are interconnected, and policies for GCM implementation should be holistic; they cannot only focus on some of the objectives.

² Example was provided from Germany, where duty to report undocumented migrants can prevent their access to non-emergency health care: [The COVID-19 vaccines and undocumented migrants in Germany - PICUM](#)

³ See for example, indicators’ framework by Civil Society Network for the Monitoring of the GCM ‘Assessing the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration: Proposal for Civil Society Indicators’, available at: [INFORME-INDICADORES-SOCIEDAD-CIVIL-ENGLISH.pdf \(sociedadcivilpactomundial.org\)](#)

Specific Action Points

- Instead of being arranged separately from intergovernmental review conferences, multistakeholder hearings must be incorporated into the official review agenda after the opening of the formal review.
- Ensure that no stakeholder representative, including migrants themselves, is left out of regional reviews of the IMRFs because of travel restrictions. This can either be done by organizing review events in countries with less restrictive visa/travel rules, or by extending support civil society and migrant representatives in obtaining visas.
- Ensure language justice: Documents must be translated in a timely manner and interpretation must be available to most commonly used languages [Spanish and Russian must be available in UNECE region's consultations and reviews].
- Governments need to set up mechanisms to consult with their national stakeholders including migrants, when implementing and reviewing the GCM, including using social dialogue and tripartite mechanisms.
- Regional GCM networks must set up consultation and cooperation mechanisms to include stakeholders.⁴ There are good examples at global Network secretariat level.
- Establish a Migrant Advisory Group to make sure migrants' lived experiences are heard and taken into consideration when implementing and reviewing the GCM, ensuring inclusion of migrant women-led organizations.⁵
- Organize a GCM talk on meaningful migrant participation.
- Support migrant-led organizations, migrant women's leadership and involvement in decision making, and youth involvement in all policy discussions and policy making.
- Ensure freedom of association, the rights to organise and collectively bargain as fundamental human rights for migrant workers, regardless of their status, to change those social and employment conditions that entrench poverty, fuel inequality and limit democracy.
- Affirm migrant women's rights, in policy, including women's freedom from violence, access to healthcare, including reproductive and sexual healthcare, access to education and decision-making positions in all spheres of society
- Collect best practices on changing harmful narratives on migration.

⁴ UK GCM Implementation Forum that is coordinated by IOM UK consists of government representatives, INGOs, local authorities and civil society organisations. This was raised as a positive example at national level, to be adopted by other governments.

⁵ One example is Red Latinas in Spain, a network of migrant women-led organizations that promotes political participation, a life free of gender based violence and access to sexual and reproductive rights.

Annex 1: Stakeholder Inputs concerning Individual GCM Objectives:

During the consultations with stakeholders, civil society provided detailed input on the GCM Objectives, recognizing the interconnectedness of all Objectives. These are listed below under the following Objectives:

Objective 1: Data

- There is a need to gather better data in ways that can provide evidence for policies and programmes. For example, only considering the number of residence permits issued is not sufficient. There is a need for data on what grounds the permits were issued on, gender and age distribution. The Employer Sanctions Directive at EU level provides that undocumented migrants can also file complaints. But there is no data on how many complaints are filed by undocumented workers, and how many resulted in compensation/remedies.
- Similarly improving availability and transparency of data concerning labor migration programs, such as worksite location, employer, and wages as well as any complaints filed by migrant workers on specific abuses (i.e. wage theft, occupational safety and health) is necessary to help reduce exploitation.
- There is more detailed data needed on irregular migration. Positively, there are several research consortia funded by the EU now on irregular migration, which will be running for the next 2-3 years.⁶
- When data collection is considered, there is also the need to consider whether this creates any vulnerabilities: Proposals, for example in Sweden, to collect information on migration status at the point of service provision and to report this for immigration enforcement, were mentioned.⁷ Such developments will not help collect data but dissuade migrants from accessing their rights and seeking services.

Objective 2: Minimize Adverse Drivers

- Adverse impacts of climate change, natural disasters, lack of sustainable development and lack of decent work opportunities continue to drive people to migrate towards and within the UNECE region.
- Investments needed to accelerate States' fulfilment of sustainable development goals and for climate change adaptation and resilience measures, remain insufficient. The region under review includes some of the richest countries in the world and they have a responsibility.
- The Loss and Damage Fund (L&D) formed at the COP28 must be adequately financed. In addition to the L&D Fund, member states in the region are also expected to participate constructively in the ongoing UNFCCC negotiations for the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) on climate finance and, as a result, to commit adequate resources to other streams of climate finance apart from L&D.
- As a positive development, Germany, Belgium and Spain have pledged 21 million euros for the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions, which is an ILO-coordinated initiative that aims to support the creation of millions of decent jobs and extend universal social protection to billions who are currently not covered.
- There is also a need to increase the share of official development assistance (ODA). Trade unions call for at least 7% of ODA to be allocated to social protection by 2030.

⁶ Examples provided include, [Mirrem](#), which looks at estimates and regularization, and [Dignity Firm](#) looking at living and working conditions of undocumented migrants.

⁷ <https://picum.org/blog/sweden-government-considers-obligation-to-denounce-undocumented-migrants/>

- International financial institutions need to be reformed to create the conditions for both job creation and formalisation instead of exacerbating inequalities within and between countries.
- The newly announced Global Coalition for Social Justice is an opportunity for strengthened multilateral cooperation with the aim of greater respect for labor rights and standards.
- Without these changes, global inequalities will continue to grow, forcing people to migrate not as a choice but as a dire necessity.
- Policies such as the **Global Labor Directive** adopted by the United States, which puts workers' rights and decent work at the center of U.S.'s foreign policy, can significantly contribute to GCM Objective 2 and should be emulated by other countries in the region.
- As an example of how access to decent work influences one's migration decision, a research on Honduras was cited: 'In Honduras, poor conditions of work (low wages, high production targets, long hours, and abusive treatment) compel workers to migrate. However, the survey revealed that workers in this country that are covered by CBAs in the workplace are 25.3% less likely to want to migrate, relative to workers without CBA coverage, as they have more access to decent work, fair wages, and safe working conditions, reducing economic coercion and other factors that compel migration.'⁸
- There is also a need to assess how the increasing reliance on third countries for EU's (and U.S.) migration control aims (externalization) impacts conditions in these third countries, potentially contributing to adverse drivers of migration (hence a deterioration in relation to objective 2).

Objective 3: Information Provision

- Civil society and humanitarian organisations are key to information provision. However, these do not always have access to migrants, for example, at border areas.

Objective 5: Regular Pathways

- People affected by climate change and environmental degradation find themselves dispossessed of their land and their means of subsistence, and without safe routes. For people forced to cross a border in this context, there are no appropriate legal responses. They are not included in existing protection mechanisms. As a result, they travel in extremely difficult conditions and their fundamental rights are often violated.
- There are a lack of permanent pathways for humanitarian needs such as these and for people fleeing violence and persecution. Labor migration pathways should not be used in place of humanitarian pathways.
- Many labor migration pathways available in the region fail to protect migrant workers' labour rights. Employer-tied work permits or visas, grant the employer control over the employment, compensation, working conditions, and migration status of the migrant worker, deterring workers from reporting labor exploitation and other abuses, from joining a union and advocating for better conditions. In particular, increasing reliance on temporary migration pathways lead to precarity, exploitation and rights violations, and infringe on migrants' right to family unity.

⁸ <https://www.solidaritycenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Publication.Honduras-Bargaining-report.5.22.pdf>

- In Canada, for example, the Temporary Foreign Workers Programme (TFWP) was described as “a breeding ground for contemporary forms of slavery” by the UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery following his visit to Canada last year.⁹
- Similarly in the UK, the Health and Care Worker Visa creates worker dependency on individual sponsors.¹⁰
- In the United States, the numerous non-immigrant guestworker visa programs are riddled with exploitation and abuse.¹¹
- There is need for fair and humane immigration policies, including access to regularization of status for undocumented migrant workers, gender-responsive and rights-based migration pathways. These must lead to decent work with full labor protections and provide routes to permanent status with family unity.
- As North America and Europe increasingly rely on migrants for care work, it is of utmost importance that pathways do not tie workers to specific employers, including through employers or recruiters charging ‘contract breach fees’,¹² and ensure that their labor rights, including freedom of association, are fully protected.
- Measures that facilitate access to residency for highly gendered and informal sectors, such as domestic and care work, must be promoted. These permits should guarantee family unity and equal treatment regarding labour and social rights. As we increasingly rely on migrants to care for us and our families, migrant care workers’ rights to a family life must be recognized as well.
- At EU level: The proposal for the creation of a Talent Pool and implementation of Talent Partnerships, launched with Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Pakistan and Bangladesh, fail to address the real problem in the sectors with labour shortages: lack of decent jobs.¹³ As these schemes are being developed, transparency, information and involvement of trade unions, civil society and migrant organisations will be key to ensure safeguards are in place and labour standards are protected instead of undermined.
- On a positive note, the European Commission’s Skills and Talent Mobility Communication also includes a recommendation on skills recognition, which can contribute to Objective 18 if social dialogue, transparency and fair treatment can be ensured.
- The revision of the EU Single Permit Directive, which creates a simplified application procedure for both work and residence permits can promote equal and fair treatment of migrant workers if social partners’ comments, in particular concerning the right to change employer, are taken on board.¹⁴
- Undocumented migrants make up an important part of the workforce in the region. Undocumented migrants are rendered vulnerable to exploitation and other rights violations due to lack of legal protection and because of criminalization of their irregular status.

⁹ [https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/09/canada-anchor-fight-against-contemporary-forms-slavery-human-rights-un#:~:text=OTTAWA%20\(6%20September%202023\)%20%E2%80%93,permanent%20residency%20for%20all%20migrants.](https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/09/canada-anchor-fight-against-contemporary-forms-slavery-human-rights-un#:~:text=OTTAWA%20(6%20September%202023)%20%E2%80%93,permanent%20residency%20for%20all%20migrants.)

¹⁰ [An inspection of the immigration system as it relates to the social care sector - TUC response | TUC](#)

¹¹ See, for example, <https://www.npr.org/2022/05/27/1101741366/human-trafficking-farmworker-abuse-georgia>

¹² See, for example, <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/economics/trapped-work-immigrant-health-care-workers-can-face-harsh-working-cond-rcna83979>

¹³ [ETUC Position on the European Commission Proposal for an EU Talent Pool | ETUC](#)

¹⁴ [Break the chain of dependency and promote equal treatment of migrant workers | ETUC](#)

- Regularization of the status of irregular migrants, would not only contribute to progress under Objective 6, but also as a way of making migration safe and orderly, hence contributing to Objective 5. Regularizing the status of undocumented migrants already in the country would also allow them to contribute to social security schemes and pay taxes.
- Even though limited in size, the regularization scheme that ran in Ireland between January and July 2022 was cited as a good example of stakeholder involvement in the design and implementation of policies result in success.¹⁵
- Europe is increasingly becoming a key destination for migrant construction workers from Central and South Asia. However, due to the lack of safe and regular migration pathways, especially for low wage migrants, these migrants are either forced to take dangerous journeys or are exposed to abusive shadowy recruitment agencies applying illegal recruitment fees leaving migrant workers in situations of debt bondage. An important increase of migrant workers (‘third country nationals’) who enter the EU via one of its members states and are subsequently posted to another EU member state is also noted. Challenges are related to the role of labor recruiters (often disguised as Temporary Work Agencies), who recruit vulnerable workers and transfer them either to other intermediaries or to companies blurring employment relations and accountability of employers.
- Concerns were raised around the discriminatory nature of existing pathways (visas, and other migration related administrative procedures) and increasing use of ‘pathways for the privileged’ as a feature of this region. While the activation of the EU Temporary Protection Directive in response to the arrival of Ukrainian refugees in 2022 was positive, the exclusion from its protection of non-Ukrainians fleeing Ukraine highlighted the need to ensure pathways are non-discriminatory.
- A robust monitoring framework is needed for Bilateral Labour Migration Agreements (BLMAs), including a space for civil society to voice their experiences and concerns, and that ensures involvement of social partners. Guidance produced and best practices collected by the UNNM workstreams on pathways through [BLMAs](#) and [pathways for migrants in vulnerable situations](#) need to be promoted and used by States. These were developed through involvement of civil society, workers and employer organisations.

Objective 6: Fair Recruitment and Decent Work

- Ensuring rights-based pathways are key for progress under Objective 6.
- Migrant workers continue to face formal and informal barriers to their right to freedom of association, to organise, to collectively bargain and to access justice mechanisms. These rights are key to enable migrant workers access all other rights.
- Migrants need access to justice without fear of retaliation. Additionally, processes for filing complaints and seeking compensation for workplace abuses are complex, for example in Kazakhstan, dissuading migrants from using existing mechanisms. The Labor Agency Investigation-Based Deferred Action process in the U.S. protects from deportation and extends work authorization to migrant workers who are organizing or speaking up to enforce labor laws. Such protections are needed to ensure migrant workers can seek justice against the abuses they face.
- There is need to reverse cuts to labor inspectorates across the region.

¹⁵ [Campaigning for regularisation in Europe - PICUM](#)

- Recruitment fees continue to be charged to migrant workers by recruitment agencies or intermediaries either directly or masked in the form of deductions related to travel, visas, housing or other costs. This adds to the conditions that render migrant workers vulnerable to exploitation and abuse as they fear losing their jobs, which may mean financial ruin not only for themselves but also their communities. The need to monitor private employment agencies and ensure they are regulated through national legislation in line with international labor standards was raised.
- Migrant workers also incur other costs for migration such as TB tests, and unnecessary language tests, adding to more financial strain.
- Minimum wage laws should protect all migrant workers and equal pay for work of equal value must be ensured.
- Women migrants, in particular domestic workers, are rendered even more vulnerable as they are isolated in homes. ILO Conventions 189 (domestic workers) and 190 (violence and harassment in the world of work) should be ratified and implemented. Domestic work must be recognised as work in national labor laws in all countries.

Objective 7: Reduce Vulnerabilities

- Fear and mistrust migrants have increase vulnerability. Firewalls must be put in place to ensure migrants can seek assistance and justice without fear of facing negative consequences due to their migration status. The U.S. deferred action initiative is given as a good example of this.
- Women and girls in migration are not inherently vulnerable but rather placed in situations which create or exacerbate exclusion, inequality and human rights abuses – including by migration policies. Women are advocates for their rights and are agents of change (Women in Migration Network – WIMN).
- Inadequate reception and housing conditions are also listed as contributing factors to vulnerabilities.
- Irregular migration creates and increases vulnerabilities, making it more difficult for people to uphold their rights. There is a need to work on regularizing the statuses of undocumented migrants. Ireland’s regularization programme (mentioned above) is presented as a good example. There were also positive examples mentioned from Greece and France. Such programmes need to be scaled up.
- Around 4 million Ukrainians in Europe have temporary protection status. This has been a good example of how regular status can be achieved and reduces vulnerabilities. However, this status will expire on 04/03/2025. A Europe -wide solution needs to be pursued now to prevent hardship and disarray in the future.
- The best interest of the child is mentioned under Objective 7. All migration policies should be assessed in terms of their potential impact on children. But this is not happening, which is apparent from the political agreement amongst EU member states to subject all children (aged 0 to 18) to border procedures under the proposed EU Migration and Asylum Pact. This will mean de facto detention. Detention can never be in the best interest of the child (also related to Objective 13).

Objective 8: Save Lives

- Crossing borders in an irregular fashion is an administrative matter, and shall not limit human rights.

- Some progress was mentioned in the creation of information protocols and the establishment of specific bodies providing information on risks and life saving services.
- There is need for evidence-based communication on dangerous routes, good practices to increase safety, and to ensure search and rescue.
- Data is crucial to inform policies and practises, but migrants in distress are underestimated also stemming from a reluctance from authorities to search for missing migrants and to identify deceased bodies.
- There is a need to ensure that families have access to safe reporting procedures with certainty that the information they provide will solely be used for search, rescue and identification, and not be used against their loved ones for immigration enforcement purposes.
- In some EU states the practice of confiscation of mobile phones upon apprehension has ended. Also, more countries are allowing families to carry out religious ceremonies for their deceased relatives.

Objective 9: Counter Smuggling

- Increased criminalization of migrants and solidarity with migrants is noted. In 2022 at least 100 people across the EU were [criminalized as human rights defenders supporting migrants](#). Such criminalization also exposes human rights defenders to violence.
- The EU Facilitation Directive of 2002 allows Member States the option of penalizing people providing humanitarian assistance to migrants at borders. This Directive should be revised to clearly state that humanitarian assistance cannot be criminalized. The current Commission proposal for its revision makes this point, but only in the recital of the Directive, which is not sufficient.

Objective 10: Eradicate Trafficking

- Identification, protection and support for survivors of human trafficking (including for victims of forced labour) must be improved.

Objective 11: Manage Borders

- There is a need to redirect the agenda from reinforcement of borders to other relevant objectives of the GCM. Focus on deterrence is also negatively impacting reception conditions.
- Stakeholders raised concerns around continued push-backs at borders, collective expulsions and refoulement.
- The externalization of borders has led to transferring responsibility for containing migration to countries with worrying human rights records and where civil society and humanitarian actors cannot freely carry out monitoring or provide services.
- Concerns were raised around increased use of technologies and algorithms for border control.

Objective 12: Screening and Referral

- Mechanisms, in particular at borders, are needed to screen all migrants with their consent, identify any specific needs and ensure timely referral to adequate services.
- The proposed EU Pact on Migration and Asylum is observed to harm the rights of migrants and asylum seekers as it will likely lead to racial profiling, increased detention and refoulement amongst other concerns.

Objective 13: Alternatives to Detention

- Detention infrastructure is growing in the UNECE region. The proposed EU Pact on Migration and Asylum is expected to increase use of detention, including of children over 12 and families. Detention will almost become automatic in EU borders.¹⁶
- Detention is a manifestation of the criminalization of migration that is so common in the region and should not take place. Under international law deprivation of liberty should be a measure of last resort and alternatives need to be used. Child immigration detention is prohibited under international law. It is always a child rights violation, and never in their best interests. Yet children continue to be detained across the UNECE region and this trend is likely to increase with the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum.
- The European ATD Network coordinated by the International Detention Coalition runs pilot projects in 7 countries, including Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Poland and the UK. There are many good examples of ATD that are developed and run through partnerships of civil society organisations, governments and local authorities that allow people to stay in the community and aim towards case resolution. These examples show the effectiveness of ATD in terms of increasing the well-being of migrants. Their cost is a fraction of the cost of detention. There are three recent independent evaluations (UK, Cyprus, Poland and Bulgaria) showing that these pilots do not affect compliance and that detention does not need to be used. As such, there is evidence coming directly from the region that ATD works, but there is no political will to scale up these projects.
- Some of the promising practices include regularization programmes which have taken place in countries such as Portugal, Ireland and Spain. There are also interesting ATD programmes in Belgium, Poland and Bulgaria and work with local authorities in cities such as Ghent, Catalonia, Torino and Rome.
- An impact report on the European ATD Network has been recently published, showing evidence on the effectiveness of the pilots and the network and showing effective government - CSO partnerships across Europe.
- Participants reminded that Germany pledged to end child immigration detention at the IMRF,¹⁷ and reported that Belgium is about to legislate on the end of child immigration detention.
- Digital Technologies are being used by some governments, who have often co-opted the use of the term ATD to include very damaging practices such as electronic tagging and monitoring. However, these are not ATD, but instead are alternative forms of detention.¹⁸
- There is a need for clear provisions on state obligations to prioritize use of ATD and prohibition of detention of children. This needs to be extended to other groups and the ultimate aim needs to be ending immigration detention across the region.

Objective 15: Access to Basic Services

- Migrants play a key role in providing basic services. However, they face barriers in accessing these services themselves. The Asylum and Immigration Act promulgated on the 26th of January 2024 in France was given as an example of deterioration as it allows automatic refusal of material reception conditions for asylum seekers amongst other limitations.¹⁹

¹⁶ [What is the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum? | International Rescue Committee \(IRC\)](#)

¹⁷ [Advocacy Brief: End Child Immigration Detention .pdf \(unicef.org\)](#)

¹⁸ [Gaining-Ground-Report-2022.pdf \(idcoalition.org\)](#)

¹⁹ [EN_SCCF_Contribution_2nd_GCM_Regional_Review.docx.pdf - Google Drive](#)

- Barriers to access to services harm migrants and society, and may also constitute unlawful discrimination, prohibited under international human rights law. Safe access to services means that all migrants, regardless of status:
 - Have access to information about available services in a language they can understand
 - Do not find cost a barrier to accessing services
 - Can safely get to the place where the services are provided
 - Receive culturally appropriate services
 - Do not fear that accessing services will put them or their family members in danger of targeting by immigration enforcement authorities.²⁰
- While digitalization may render some services more accessible, digital divide can also set a barrier in accessing services for migrants.
- Language barriers, lack of documentation, and even discrimination can create insurmountable walls, hindering young migrants' potential and leaving them vulnerable. The consequences are far-reaching, impacting their physical and mental health and limiting their opportunities and ability to integrate into society. This is a missed opportunity for our communities. Young migrants bring diverse perspectives, skills, and experiences that enrich our societies. However, without access to essential services, their potential remains untapped.
- Youth representatives²¹ highlighted the need to:
 - Invest in language learning programs: Equipping young migrants with the skills to communicate effectively in their new environment is crucial for their integration and access to services.
 - Equip educators and healthcare providers with cultural competency training: This allows them to understand better and cater to the specific needs of a diverse population.
 - Promote inclusive environments within schools and healthcare settings: These environments should be welcoming and supportive, fostering a sense of belonging for all young people
- Successful policies, such as Portugal's grace period for migrants to access health services regardless of status, need to be replicated.

Objective 16: Empower for full inclusion and social cohesion

- There is a need for supporting initiatives around arts, culture and heritage. These contribute to migrants' inclusion and also help counter negative narratives and combat xenophobia and racism.
- Provision of language courses are crucial for inclusion and integration of migrants into societies. This is also essential for access to the labor market and to education.
- Anti-migrant narratives undermine social inclusion and social cohesion efforts. There are concerns over migrants being instrumentalized in elections.
- Undocumented migrants face social exclusion. Regularization programs are crucial to ensure inclusion of migrants into the society.
- Migrant women, especially those from racialized communities and gender- diverse migrants, should be able to live free from violence.
- Freedom of association, the right to organize and collectively bargain are key for migrants empowerment and for migrants to be able to advocate for their rights.

²⁰ Women in Migration Network (WIMN).

²¹ Migration, Youth and Children Platform (MYCP).

- There is need to strengthen cooperation and partnerships between different sectors of the society to ensure a more balanced conversation around migration.

Objective 17: Eliminate Discrimination

- Even citizens of migrant origin continue to face discrimination in accessing employment opportunities. This is not an issue of legal status, but there is need to combat discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion.
- The political agreement on the revision of the Schengen Borders Code would allow police to carry out random document checks near internal EU borders with the aim of finding undocumented migrants. As research shows that police tend to stop people for documents based on imputed racial, ethnic or religious characteristics, the revision is likely to result in racial profiling.
- There are innovative youth-led initiatives targeting the root causes of xenophobia, strengthening community unity, and referrals to services to help integrate migrants. Some examples are the initiatives of the finalists of MYCP youth leadership and innovation award, including Peace Therapy that provides mental health support for migrants and refugees and Legal Culture NGO providing pro bono legal advice to migrants.
- Migrant women, including Black and indigenous women, face backlash, demonization and criminalization as migrants while also facing the assault on their autonomy as women.
- States must address intersecting forms of discrimination in policy and work to end racial discrimination, taking effective measures to condemn and hold accountable all acts, manifestations and expressions of racism and anti-immigrant hostility, harassment and violence

Objective 18: Skills Development and Recognition

- There are still significant barriers migrants face to have their qualifications and skills recognized. In particular, many diverse skills that are required to carry out care work, continue to be undervalued.
- Governments should prioritize the training and recognition of domestic workers' skills within the care economy. However, this must be addressed with an inclusive approach that does not reproduce hierarchies within care systems (i.e. "skilled" versus "unskilled" workers).
- Concerns of communities in origin countries in terms of losing valuable human resources to stronger economies (brain drain) was raised as a factor furthering global inequalities and hampering many countries' ability to achieve sustainable development goals and a just transition to green economies.
- Existing structures of apprenticeship programs run in partnership of governments, trade unions and employers' organisations should be explored for migrant workers to develop skills and access decent jobs with full labor protections.

Objective 19: Migrant and Diaspora Contributions

- Migrants and diaspora are often the first responders to crisis in origin or destination countries mobilizing their expertise, experience, knowledge, skills, financial and other resources.²²

Objective 20: Remittances and Financial Inclusion

²² See, for example, work of [Shabaka](#), which is a diaspora-led organisation focused on the role of diaspora and migrants in humanitarian preparedness, response, and recovery.

- Remittances can be channelled into job creation, as loans for SMEs. There are good initiatives in France (FORIM's PROASIM), Germany (WIDU), UK (Diaspora Finance Initiative), Netherlands (Zidicircle), and Switzerland (AFFORD Business Centre) to channel remittances into development instead of only individual use. AFFORD and the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) Diaspora Investors' Training for those interested in raising financing for African SMEs through crowdfunding. AFFORD and SNV Diaspora investment into the Green economy in the Ashanti and Western Regions of Ghana.
- The challenge is scaling up small initiatives to the national level while ensuring sustainability and long-term effects for countries of destination and origin.
- Diaspora helps build sustainable partnerships with International Organisations, NGOs, local communities, and private sector to ensure the implementation of GCM objectives as whole-of-society approach.

Objective 21: Dignified Return and Reintegration

- More cooperation needed with countries of origin and stakeholders in those countries and diaspora to ensure reintegration. Support to returnees tend to be short term or one off and do not lead to full integration.
- Governments should promote changes to harmful narratives about the deported/returnee population and facilitate their re-entry with human rights, labor rights, and full access to services and to identity for themselves and their children.

Objective 22: Social Protection

- Migrants are disproportionately excluded from social protection, which heightens their risk of falling into poverty.²³
- Migrants work and when they go back to their origin country for retirement, they cannot access their retirement benefits in the countries they worked.
- In dialogue with social partners, governments must take measures to allow portability of social benefits between countries. Destination countries can particularly benefit from extending the contributory schemes to cover migrants, as their contributions can help increase the financing base for these schemes, as well as enlarge the pool of contributors and beneficiaries for greater collective risk sharing.²⁴

Objective 23: International Cooperation

- Development efforts should be inclusive to overcome global inequalities.
- Numerous examples of agreements between states or Frontex demonstrate a focus on deterrence and returns rather than the creation of regular pathways that ensure rights or for integration.²⁵

²³ [ITUC Economic Briefing: Ensuring Migrants' Access to Social Protection - International Trade Union Confederation \(ituc-csi.org\)](#)

²⁴ [ITUC Policy Brief: a new social contract for migrant workers - International Trade Union Confederation \(ituc-csi.org\)](#)

²⁵ Some references were made to (planned or actual) agreements between Italy and Albania, UK and Frontex, Germany with Georgia and Morocco focusing on returns or curbing irregular migration.