



**ENSEMBLE,  
CONSTRUIRE  
UN MONDE JUSTE  
ET FRATERNEL**

## [Secours Catholique-Caritas France's contribution to the European Regional Review of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration on March 11<sup>th</sup> 2024](#)

As the second Regional Review of the Global Compact on Migration takes place, Secours Catholique - Caritas France would like to draw the attention of decision-makers to the multiple crises affecting migrants.

Even though the Global Compact on Migration offers, on paper, substantial points of support on the key issues of protecting the rights of migrants, there is a huge gap between the commitments made under the Compact and the reality. In particular, we are witnessing a **crisis in policies** that all too often run counter to commitments to protect migrants and respect their human rights.

In France, Secours Catholique - Caritas France has observed **violations of fundamental rights and a lack of access to basic services for migrants throughout the country, particularly at borders**. The same is true for many people living in camps and slums on French soil. These observations are now compounded by a political context that tends to deny existing rights, and by an ever-widening gap between rights and the effectiveness of rights. The Asylum and Immigration Act promulgated on the 26<sup>th</sup> of January 2024 is a striking example of this worrying trend. Highly restrictive, this law calls into question the guarantee of fundamental rights and public freedoms, and reinforces and creates the vulnerability of migrants on French territory. In particular:

- The automatic nature of refusals of material reception conditions for asylum seekers.
- The introduction of new grounds for refusing residency, leading to a risk of arbitrariness on the part of the prefect, and excessive requirements linked to integration. These measures tend to weaken the right to residence, at the risk of increasing the number of undocumented migrants.
- The possibility for French consular authorities to refuse to issue a visa (short or long stay) to nationals of States considered as non-cooperating in terms of readmission.

In addition to this political situation, which is already extremely violent for migrants, a scheme to reform state medical aid is due to be presented in the next few months. In contradiction with the commitment made when the Global Compact on Migration was signed,<sup>1</sup> specifically objective 15 on access to health, as well as the French constitutional objective of protecting public health, this reform is likely to worsen access to healthcare for migrants. Secours Catholique - Caritas France calls:

- For everyone to be covered by health insurance, regardless of their administrative status
- For access to healthcare to include access to hygiene, toilets, showers and water, which is currently not guaranteed to all homeless people, regardless of their administrative situation.
- For each unaccompanied minor to have a representative on French soil who can intervene to facilitate access to healthcare.

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<sup>1</sup> The MMP is a non-binding agreement, but it builds on long-standing commitments on access to services made by states under international human rights law.

Secours Catholique is also concerned about the measures proposed by the European Commission in the new European Pact on Migration and Asylum: no reference is made to the Global Pact on Migration, safe and legal channels for migration are barely mentioned, as is access to basic services. **Secours Catholique calls for the rights and dignity of migrants to be respected:**

- **An end to the externalisation of borders and the introduction of protection mechanisms guaranteeing respect for the rights of migrants throughout their migratory journey.** This implies, for example, abolishing the restrictions on border procedures provided for in the European Pact, which are designed to reduce guarantees of the right to asylum, detain people in closed centres and send them back to countries considered safe. This also entails implementing a European rescue system on the routes of exile, and putting an end to the diversion of development aid for the purpose of controlling migration in order to combat the root causes of poverty and inequality.
- **The introduction of a harmonised and protective European asylum system,** which must involve a thorough overhaul of the Dublin Regulation. Asylum applications should no longer systematically be examined by the country of entry into the European Union, but by the country of the person's choice. In addition, solidarity between Member States must be strengthened to ensure fair procedures, harmonisation of asylum rules based on a high level of protection and dignified reception conditions throughout Europe.

These policy trends are taking place at a time where the effects of climate change and environmental degradation are leading more and more people to leave their homes in anticipation of or in response to an environmental risk, whether sudden or gradual. The people affected find themselves dispossessed of their land and their means of subsistence, very often without sufficient financial resources or information about their rights, 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.

To respond to the context of multiple crises and the heightened vulnerability of migrants, **we are calling for global governance of migration that effectively protects and respects the rights of these populations.**

**The current context demonstrates once again how essential it is for people to be able to take safe and legal migration routes that allow them to move around while respecting their rights.**

To this end, **Objective 5** of the Global Compact on Migration, which is the cornerstone for the implementation of many of the Pact's objectives, proposes concrete measures to **build safe and legal migration channels that respect human rights for all migrants, taking into account their needs in terms of protection, work and family life.**

In line with **Goal 2**, which recognises the effects of climate change as a negative factor in migration, Goal 5 also proposes measures to address the protection gap for environmental migrants. **Secours Catholique-Caritas France therefore calls on States to engage in national, regional and international discussions in favour of the development of safe, legal, effective and accessible migration channels for environmental migrants and their integration into existing protection mechanisms. These discussions should include reflections on the applicability of humanitarian visas, temporary or permanent protection statuses and the principle of non-refoulement for environmental migrants.**

While solutions exist in the Global Compact on Migration, Secours Catholique is concerned about policies that run counter to the rights of migrants and the lack of political will on the part of certain States to truly implement the Compact.

**Secours Catholique is therefore calling for a paradigm shift in migration policy, based on rights and dignity.**

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