CPMR Task Force on Migration Management
Updated Terms of Reference approved by the Migration TF on 26 April 2023

1. Definitions

For the purposes of this Task Force the following terms are defined as follows:

- **migrant** refers to a non-EU third country national (TCN) who leaves one country to settle in an EU Member State, irrespective of the causes, voluntary or involuntary, and the means, regular or irregular, used to migrate.

- **beneficiary of international protection (BIP)** refers to a person who has been granted refugee status or subsidiary protection status.

- **asylum seeker** is a person who seeks protection from persecution or serious harm in a country other than their own and awaits a decision on the application for refugee status under relevant international and national instruments.

These terms are in accordance with the respective definitions used by DG Migration and Home Affairs of the European Commission.

2. Context

Since 1999, the EU has been trying to set up a balanced, comprehensive and common migration policy\(^1\), built upon solidarity and responsibility sharing, in order to seize the opportunities whilst tackling the challenges concerning migration flows.

The unprecedented influx of people into the European Union in 2015 put the issue at the very top of the EU agenda, prompting the mobilisation of European funds and the publication of the new European Agenda on Migration in May 2015 to address immediate emergencies and challenges. However, proposals to reform the Common European Asylum System (the so-called Dublin regulation) and relieve pressure on frontline countries through a mandatory relocation of asylum seekers proved to be a major stumbling block in the EU negotiations.

In 2019, the von der Leyen Commission announced a New Pact on Migration and Asylum as one of the key objectives of its mandate (2019-2024) under the priority “Promoting our European Way of Life”. The Pact was published on 23 September 2020. It takes stock of the lessons learnt from the 2015 crisis and advocates a comprehensive and sustainable approach addressing both the internal and external dimensions of migration management.

At global level there are also on-going different processes of dialogue (United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and Global Compacts on Migration and Refugees), as well as at regional level (Africa-EU partnership) and at the sub-regional level (Rabat Process, Euromed ministerial meetings, 5+5 Western Med dialogue, Union for the Mediterranean, Euro-Med Assembly of Regional and Local Authorities, Eastern Partnership) to mention just a few.

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EU migration and asylum policy aims to better organise legal migration within an effective and multilaterally coherent migration governance enhancing the integration and inclusion of non-EU nationals in EU societies, curbing irregular migration, tackling root causes and managing migration through partnerships with non-EU countries, ensuring respect for, and protection of, migrants’ human rights. It seeks to mobilise all relevant stakeholders including Member States, regional and local authorities, NGOs, civil society and not least migrants themselves.

Nevertheless, migration and asylum is still a highly sensitive and complex political issue, and the EU Member States have been struggling to agree on the proposed legislation under the Pact, despite some small progress on aspects related to legal migration and the external dimension.

In the meantime, Europe continues to be confronted with multiple challenges, highlighting the need for more sustainable long-term solutions:

- continued irregular arrivals at its external borders with migrants often making dangerous sea crossings organised by people smugglers
- the phenomenon of instrumentalization of migration for political purposes, the increase in racism and xenophobia and the threat that it poses to democracy
- the persisting inequalities and discrimination that migrant and racialized people face in all areas of life, hindering long term social cohesion
- the COVID pandemic which highlighted and exacerbated the vulnerability of migrants and refugees, especially those in crowded camps and reception centres
- and finally, the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and the unprecedented number of refugee arrivals in European countries not witnessed since the Second World War.

At territorial level, among the sub-national governments, European Regions operate using relevant experience on the ground. It goes without saying that Regions have key competences, experience, awareness and a fundamental role to play in migration issues and in particular in the framework of responses to emergencies within the territory, integration and inclusion of migrants and socio-economic development. Nevertheless, the majority of them do not have any formal legal competence regarding the management of migration flows, which are in the hands of the Member States.

### 3. Key issues

Europe must work to find sustainable solutions to address migration phenomena; on the one hand with regard to the effective integration and inclusion of migrants into European societies, and on the other hand with regard to the continuing instability in neighbouring areas and beyond (conflicts, violence, extreme poverty, climate change), which may result in an unceasing influx of migrants towards Europe.

There is a need to establish a long-term effective, plural and integrated multilevel governance model for managing migration based on a concrete strategy for legal migration, the fight against irregularities, criminality and human traffic (establishing effective legal pathways for people to migrate), the respect of the right to asylum, economic cooperation, the positive relationship between migration and development, and a more effective cooperation with countries of transit and origin in all areas of migration.

It is clear that migration management also requires an effective multilevel governance, multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approach. The pivotal role of Regions in vertical coordination between EU, Member State and local level, and in horizontal coordination, as a catalyst to pool resources within
their territories with all key stakeholders, ensures the effectiveness and efficiency of actions. This role must be acknowledged by Member States and at EU level, correctly applying the subsidiarity principle, and support should be targeted to regional authorities, both to build their capacities in this field and by ensuring the correct allocation of funding among the various levels of governance.

Voluntary Regions should be more and systematically involved in the identification and implementation of possible solutions. In this sense, it is necessary that they are not simply the executors of directives from national governments, but be ready and able to influence them to become stakeholders that are increasingly involved in actions towards political peace, dialogue and cooperation.

4. Objectives of the Task Force

→ Policy and Advocacy
  - Develop policy messages, analyses and recommendations, to profile, advocate for and secure the added value of regional action across all areas of migration and asylum policy and better programme and funding opportunities to strengthen their capacities.

→ Innovative processes and exchange of visions and best practices
  - Encourage and strengthen new cooperation processes and partnerships of particular added value, innovation and effectiveness for more effective migration management and governance.
  - Facilitate communication and exchange of concrete best practices between regional authorities and their partners.

→ Consolidation and implementation of a regional strategy on migration, mobility and development
  - Build a common strategy based on identified and potential areas of regional action and opportunities offered through the financial instruments during the programming period 2021-2027 and beyond.

→ Complementarity, synergy, projects and pilot actions
  - Promote and complement the impact of the CPMR Task Force on migration management and the individual work of its members, as well as synergies with other CPMR Working Groups (e.g. Climate, Gender, Core) and all the Geographical Commissions, as necessary.
  - Conceive pilot actions for the future to be developed by its members, possibly with the support of EU funds.
  - Monitor and engage in other relevant partnerships, particularly those around other organisations, networks or events, as appropriate.
  - Support the participation of the CPMR, some of its Geographical Commissions and/or some of its members within the relevant Fora dealing with migration issues at local and regional level.
  - Participate in and support the implementation of specific projects (including under relevant EU calls) conceived by its regions and institutes specialised in migration.
Accountability and effectiveness:
- Monitor and assess the effectiveness and impact of actions to improve migration management and its coherent multilateral and multilevel governance vis-à-vis the EU and international organisations or transnational associations of sub-national authorities, as well as of the actions and deliverables of the Task Force.

5. Areas of Action

Internal Dimension (Reception, Integration and Inclusion)
- Promotion of reflections and recommendations on possible measures for improving the practical, immediate response, with respect for migrants’ human rights, to the challenges of humanitarian emergencies in CPMR Regions, caused by irregular migration flows/large numbers of asylum seekers;
- Initial reception and integration measures
- Effective and participatory socio-economic integration and inclusion of migrants in their host communities
- Fight against all forms of discrimination (both social and structural) towards migrants and racialized people, in coherence with, among others, the EU Anti-racism Action Plan 2020-2025.

External Dimension (Decentralised Cooperation and Socio-Economic Development)
- Promotion of a better coordination across levels of governments in the migration-development nexus, broader joint reflections on the deepest roots of migratory flows and more effective action for improving its management
- Circular migration as an asset for economic integration in EU Neighbourhoods
- Promoting the conditions for sustainable development (in its broader definition and creating interlinkage with climate change and environmental degradation) in the countries of origin and transit of migration flows through development of cooperation actions (link with Neighbourhood Policy and Development Cooperation).
- Support for dialogue among cultures and religions

In addition, the Task Force, in collaboration with the CPMR Balkan and Black Sea Commission, will also have a coordinating role in the CPMR’s activities on:

Solidarity with Ukraine
- Specific issues related to the reception and integration of Ukrainian refugees
- Humanitarian and emergency support
- Role of regions in reconstruction efforts in the framework of Ukraine’s EU accession process.
6. Composition and Working Arrangements of the Task Force

→ The Task Force consists of:

- A CPMR Coordinating region that should periodically report to the Political Bureau
- CPMR Member Regions with an interest in the objectives and thematic areas mentioned above and that have indicated their desire to take part in the Task Force (Regions shall appoint officers of their internal departments or agencies directly concerned by migration issues);
- The Executive Secretaries of the CPMR’s Geographical Commissions (ex-officio);
- CPMR General Secretariat (ex-officio);
- External experts and special advisers, invited to participate as observers, if needed and on an ad-hoc basis.

→ Leadership and Responsibilities of the Task Force

The general tasks of the Task Force, supported by the CPMR Secretariat, shall be to:

- Steer the dialogue, experience exchange and cooperation among its members on Migration policies
- Reflect on ways to enhance the territorial dimension of the EU’s medium- and long-term policies related to Migration and the effective implementation of the relevant priorities, such as the integration and inclusion of migrants into host communities, the emergency situations in Member-States of reception and transit of migrants, and the contribution of the Regions to the external dimension of migration policies through their decentralised development cooperation
- Provide the necessary resources to prepare possible policy positions (resolutions, reports, etc.) and pilot actions (e.g. project ideas) for the CPMR’s executive bodies and Calls for Proposals
- Endorse CPMR policy positions on migration, which are then presented to the CPMR statutory bodies for information (Political Bureau and General Assembly)
- Shape the relevant thematic sessions in the CPMR statutory meetings (Political Bureau and General Assembly)
- Support the liaison of the Task Force with relevant EU and international institutions, networks and actors (European Commission, European Parliament and Parliamentary Assembly of the UfM, CoR, ARLEM, UfM Secretariat, etc.)
- Participate in/disseminate information on events organised by member regions and external partners and/or launch or participate in awareness campaigns
- Organise ad hoc lobbying meetings with relevant EU institutions and other key players.

The leadership of the Task Force shall be assumed by Generalitat Valenciana (Spain), which shall be responsible for reporting to the CPMR Political Bureau when needed.

The Geographical Commissions should be actively involved, in particular those whose members are especially concerned by migratory flows and emergency situations and are active in the field of integration policies.

The CPMR Secretariat shall provide secretarial services.
Operational Arrangements

- The working language of the Task Force shall be English. When needed for official public events of the Task Force, the cost of simultaneous translation for other languages or for specific interpretation services shall be covered by the Region hosting the meeting/event.
- The Region hosting the event shall cover the catering expenses. Where possible and appropriate, logistical support shall be sought from the EU Institutions (e.g. Committee of the Regions) and/or partner networks and actors.
- The CPMR shall provide secretarial tasks and assist in the preparation of meetings. It shall cover translation expenses (English/French) for papers presented to the Political Bureau and General Assembly.
- The CPMR will cover the travel and accommodation expenses of any outside experts, limited to 2 per year. Should it be felt necessary to commission additional sources of expertise requiring remuneration, the issue will be examined by the Task Force Member Regions and the CPMR Secretariat.
- Each member of the Task Force shall cover his or her own travel and subsistence expenses relating to participation in the meetings and events of the Task Force.

Meetings of the Task Force

The Task Force shall hold a reduced number of formal meetings as necessary, depending on the relevant EU and CPMR agendas in relation to the above-mentioned objectives and thematic areas. In principle, the meetings will be held in Brussels or in a host Region. Whenever it will be considered necessary, the meetings will be organised in a hybrid or fully online format.

The activities of the Task Force will continue with regular meetings held mainly through remote webinar facilities.

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The Inter-Commission Task Force was established by the CPMR in February 2015 based on the first formal request of the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission.