The EU Pact on Migration and Asylum  
Perspective of peripheral maritime regions  
Approved by the CPMR Political Bureau, 22 March 2024, Patras (Western Greece)

In order to provide a comprehensive and sustainable European approach to migration and asylum management, the European Commission proposed a new European Pact on Migration and Asylum in September 2020.

After many long months of complex negotiations, the Council of the European Union and European Parliament finally concluded the political agreements on all legislative texts comprising the Pact in December 2023. The whole EU Pact remains now to be adopted by the European Parliament in plenary scheduled for 10-11 April) and the Council (scheduled end of April).

Throughout the process, the voluntary Regions of the CPMR Migration Task Force have been highlighting the importance of a multi-level governance, multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral approach to migration management that links both the internal and external dimensions, and raising awareness of the needs and added value of regional action in all areas in which they have either formal competences or where regional action is needed to implement EU and national objectives.

This statement sets out some key messages on the Pact from the perspective of the peripheral maritime Regions. They will be brought to the attention of the co-legislators and the Belgian Presidency, both in view of the last Plenary session of the EU Parliament in April and after EU elections, to the new Members of the European Parliament (e.g. LIBE Committee) and to the new EU Commissioners.

In this perspective a human centered implementation of the EU Pact will be fundamental to deliver a real change on the ground, hence the CPMR will monitor impacts in its regions and keep advocating for tangible improvements.
The CPMR:

1. **Acknowledges the efforts** of the European Parliament and EU Council to reach an agreement on the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum after a long and complex negotiation process. Is nevertheless **concerned that there is still not enough political will** to prepare for its effective implementation and fears that its entry into force will be delayed.

2. **Recalls** once more the need for a **long-term strategic vision** related to European migration policies and recognises that the Pact goes some way to ensuring a more holistic approach and greater predictability and preparedness to manage migration more effectively. However, it fears that **the Pact does not go far enough in providing sustainable future-proof solutions** in the face of a rapidly evolving and uncertain global context, unprecedented numbers of forced displacements including those linked to environmental conditions, increased mobility of populations worldwide, and demographic realities and challenges within Europe.

3. **Regrets** that the proposed mechanisms for “solidarity and fair sharing of responsibility” between Member States fall short of expectations and demonstrate a lack of real political commitment to these fundamental EU principles. In particular, the introduction of a monetary contribution appears purely symbolic in the face of real needs on the ground, especially those faced by frontline regions and countries under pressure. This, combined with the expanded and mandatory use of border procedures, could lead to additional challenges and issues in some EU border states. **Continues to call for binding solidarity and shared responsibility by all Member States** in the new Pact on Migration and Asylum.

4. **Deplores** the continued **tragic loss of life at sea**, especially along the Mediterranean and Atlantic routes, and underlines that 2023 has been the deadliest year on record since 2015 with people fleeing via even more dangerous routes. It therefore urges for more to be done to ensure **unhindered search and rescue operations**, create **safe legal pathways** like resettlement programmes for persons seeking refuge in Europe, **combat people smuggling and human trafficking**, and prevent **irregular crossings**. The use of the current resources, including Frontex operations, should be re-arranged to ensure better response. In addition, the EU must step up efforts to **assist and invest in third countries** to tackle the root causes of irregular migration.

5. **Stresses** that the peripheral maritime Regions of the CPMR firmly adhere to the principles of **equality, respect for human rights and non-discrimination**, and urges the Member States to strictly abide by international and European rules that uphold **human rights and respect human dignity** of all migrant persons, regardless of their status, when implementing the different legislative texts of the Pact.

6. **Welcomes** the fact that the Pact:
   
   i. acknowledges the role of the Regions and local authorities by encouraging their **consultation in the design of national strategies, plans, reports and programmes**. However, in light of the non-binding nature of such consultation, it calls on the European Commission to strongly recommend Member States to **apply the co-design and consultation principles and monitor this multi-level governance approach** in practice. It also encourages the EU institutions to organise **regular forums at the EU level** bringing together States and Regions.
ii. foresees that **regional and local authorities should receive necessary resources** when they are involved in the implementation of **national contingency plans**. Calls upon the EU institutions to ensure this is done **according to distribution of competences** and to foresee **direct funding** opportunities in this respect. **Warns** however that given the highly resource-intensive nature of migration management, the **ambitions cannot always be realistically matched with the necessary material and human resources and capacities on the ground** when Regions are dealing with large numbers of people in their territory.

iii. **takes into account the situation at regional and local level** within a Member State when defining a situation of **migratory pressure** requiring solidarity measures as foreseen in the Crisis Regulation and Asylum and Migration Management Regulation. In this regard, points to the fact that Regions have first-hand knowledge of emerging situations that require emergency response and calls therefore to **involve concerned Regions in the Migration Preparedness and Crisis Blueprint Network and** in the procedure for activating the **EU Civil Protection Mechanism**.

7. **Highlights** the need to consider the **specific situations of some of the EU’s Outermost Regions, islands and regions on the external maritime borders**, which on account of their geography are facing very significant and more complex challenges that they are unable to manage alone. Urges the European institutions to work with the concerned Regions and Member States to **design and implement tailor-made measures** to address these challenges and a **specific adjustment reserve** provided with adequate funding to react to growing emergencies.

8. **Recalls** that regional and local authorities play a crucial role in the field of **first reception, integration and socioeconomic inclusion**, which is an **integral component for the success of the European Migration Strategy**. **Advocates for a whole of government and whole of society approach** to ensure effective management and improved outcomes for migrants and refugees, considering integration as a two-way process of mutual adaptation that provides migrants and refugees with equal opportunities, rights and obligations.

9. **Urges** the European institutions to provide Regions with **direct funding for more structured actions**, since projects have limited scope and impact. Regions can channel and target funding locally more quickly and effectively. **Simplification** is required to relieve the administrative burden and ensure rapid deployment of funds, especially when dealing with emergency situations.

10. **Welcomes** the **special attention to persons with vulnerabilities**, and especially the case of **unaccompanied minors** for whom many regional authorities have legal guardianship. **Stresses** in this regard the need for a clear framework and necessary resources to ensure their rights, needs and best interests are taken into account. Hence, it proposes to set up new **adaptive measures and instruments**, such as a **new EU scheme in the form of a “EU Bank of families”** to support unaccompanied minors and their fast and secure welcome in EU voluntary families across all EU regions.

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1 Regulation 2026/369 of 15 March 2016
11. **Calls** for clarity regarding the future of Ukrainians currently benefitting from temporary protection within the EU, to ensure that the Regions can continue to provide them with the necessary support for integration and inclusion within their host communities. Therefore, the CPMR urges the European authorities to continue to promote mechanisms to support the Ukrainian people and introduce direct funding instruments so that regional and local administrations can continue to meet the needs of those displaced by the war in Ukraine.

12. **Recalls** that Regions are still dealing with undocumented migrants living within their territories to whom they often provide basic public services on humanitarian grounds. This is a reality that is not taken into account in legislation and support mechanisms including funding, which is creating a distorted impact and generating increased issues and needs especially across peripheral maritime regions.

13. **Calls** on the European institutions to develop more programmes and funding opportunities for European interregional cooperation on migration, since knowledge sharing and transfer of best practices among regional and local authorities is valuable to help build capacities and enhance outcomes as well as provide mutual aid and solidarity between receiving and hosting regions.

14. **Highlights** the need also to support European Regions through relevant programmes and funding to develop decentralised cooperation actions with their own counterparts, local stakeholders and international organisations in third countries of origin designed to contribute to sustainable development goals and fight against those inequalities that constitute root causes of migration.

15. **Underlines** the importance of combating disinformation, discrimination, xenophobia and racism. Urges public authorities at all levels of governance to promote fact-based narratives around migration, including the positive effects of mobility schemes and legal labour migration and inclusion, and develop plans, strategies and programmes to counter these phenomena and foster equality, interculturality and peaceful living together in European societies.

16. **Stresses** the need for better data and evidence-based research, including at the regional level, for more informed policymaking and targeting of resources. In this regard, suggests to further expand the pilot initiative “MIPEX-R” (Migrant Integration Policy Regional Index) developed under the REGIN project led by the CPMR, as a useful EU tool for regional authorities.

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**All legislative texts comprising the Pact on Migration and Asylum can be found here:**
The Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) represents more than 150 regional authorities from 24 countries across Europe and beyond. Organised in Geographical Commissions, the CPMR works to ensure that a balanced territorial development is at the heart of the European Union and its policies.

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