A new ambition for EU migration policy?
Impact on the Regions

Claire Street, Project and Policy Officer, claire.street@crpm.org

Background

Strong borders and a fresh start on migration are among the priorities announced by President von der Leyen under one of the six headline ambitions ‘Promoting our European way of life.

The new Commissioner for Home Affairs, Ylva Johansson, has been tasked to help find common ground to develop a New Pact on Migration and Asylum. In this regard, she has been visiting Member States on a so-called ‘Tour de Capital’ in order to discuss the way forward, especially to overcome the deadlock on the reform of the Dublin system on asylum. A consultation with the LIBE Committee of the European Parliament is also foreseen.

The Pact will have the following aims:

- Relaunch the reform of asylum rules
- Close loopholes between asylum and return rules
- Set up a new, more sustainable, reliable and permanent approach to search and rescue
- Stronger borders with the reinforced European Border and Coast Guard Agency
- Develop stronger cooperation with countries of origin and transit
- Ensure there are genuine legal pathways to the European Union
- Step up the fight against human traffickers and smugglers
- Return to a fully functioning Schengen Area of free movement

The European Commission also foresees an Action Plan on Integration in the autumn 2020, for which an open consultation will be launched in the spring.

This paper aims to analyse current policy developments and evaluate opportunities for the regions to reaffirm their added value and highlight their needs.
1. EU Pact on Migration and Asylum

The announcement by President Van der Leyen of a new Pact on Migration & Asylum, due to be released in the spring of 2020, is a strong signal of the will to move forward on this common policy area, taking stock of the lessons learnt from the 2015 crisis.

The expected main lines of the new Pact are:

- Emphasis on the balance between solidarity and responsibility to better manage migratory flows. This implies more political will on the part of the Member States
- Better coordination between the internal and external dimensions
- Big focus on partnerships with third countries of transit and origin to reduce irregular migration, especially through readmission agreements
- Strategy on the development of human potential and trade to tackle root causes of irregular migration
- Development of legal pathways to speed up resettlement, and promotion of circular migration for mutual benefit of EU and third countries (matching labour market with skills)
- Reinforcement of the Border & Coast Guard Agency with an expected standing corps of 10,000 staff by 2024

Most of these messages are the same line as those advocated by the CPMR Task Force on Migration management.

Commissioner Johansson stated recently that progress is being made towards a compromise on EU migration and asylum policy. The question remains as to what kind of concrete arrangements will be set out in the Pact, notably regarding the CEAS reform and a possible automatic relocation system for asylum seekers which has so far met with strong resistance from certain Member States.

The effectiveness of partnerships with third countries has also been the subject of much criticism, given the difficulties encountered with Turkey, Libya and Morocco in particular. It remains to be seen how the EU intends to address this challenge.

CPMR Outlook

- Keep stressing the importance of multi-level governance in the management of migration
- The strong focus on the external dimension in the Pact, including the will to develop partnerships with third countries to tackle irregular migration, is a positive step. It can provide an opportunity for regions to develop their strategy on mobility, migration, development to highlight added value of their action.
- However, it is necessary to keep highlighting regional needs on the ground. In reality, regional and local authorities still have to deal through their own resources with persons refused asylum/undocumented migrants staying in their territories.
- Look at how regions can contribute to the reformed CEAS, for example through initiatives such as the Basque Government’s SHARE proposal and similar initiatives for the redistribution of refugees and asylum seekers among voluntary regions based on specific criteria (e.g. population, GDP, unemployment rate).
- Contribute with evidence-based data on the value added of regional action in integration and inclusion policies and point to needs still existing on the ground.
2. EU Action Plan on Integration

As announced in its annual work plan of 27 January, the European Commission plans to publish an Action Plan on Integration in the last quarter of 2020 (September or October).

A consultation phase will be launched in the spring to develop the strategy that will frame the plan. More details will be available in the coming weeks.

Many regional and local authorities understand that promoting successful integration and inclusion should be a key component of their own development strategies. The European Commission has indicated that it will continue to work closely on this topic through the channel of the Committee of the Regions and the #Regions4Integration initiative of which the CPMR is an associated partner.

CPMR Outlook

The CPMR Task Force on Migration will therefore be in a strong position to contribute to the consultation.

- Good basis for reflection, notably through the CPMR issue paper on the internal dimension and the mapping.
- In addition, the REGIN project (Regions for Migrants’ and Refugees’ Integration) led by the CPMR and launched in February 2020 will further develop actions to improve policy performance, develop the EU knowledge base and build capacities. Six of its member Regions are involved (Azores, Campania, Catalonia, Murcia, Puglia, Skane) and through the project will be testing innovative integration actions.

3. What about funding?

Migration is mentioned as one of the key EU priorities to be considered in the 2021-2027 EU budget, based on a comprehensive approach that addresses both internal and external aspects. This is reflected in the complementarity of proposed funding instruments to support cross-cutting actions dealing with migration issues.

Also in light of lessons learnt from the crisis of 2015 and the need to be able to take action at short notice, a cushion is allocated under external funding to address unforeseen circumstances, new needs or emerging challenges.

Co-legislators are currently deciding on the final regulations and allocations for the new EU funds related to the internal and external dimensions of migration directly involving regions for the post-2020 period.
Funds available to regional and local authorities for actions related to EU migration policies in the 2021-2027 programming period

- Latest developments
  - AMF
    
    This fund foresees a thematic facility to support actions of regional and local authorities. A higher co-funding rate would also be applied to these actions.

    However, the latest negotiating boxes have seen the proposed allocation reduced. The thematic facility, originally proposed at 40% of the total AMF, currently stands at 36.55%.

**MIGRATION AND BORDER MANAGEMENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Heading 4: Migration and border management</th>
<th>MFF 2014-2020 (EU27+EDF)</th>
<th>EC proposal</th>
<th>FI PRES Negotiation-Box (Dec’19)</th>
<th>EUCO PRES Negotiation-Box (Feb’20)</th>
<th>Change (EUCO Pres vs EC proposal)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asylum and Migration Fund</td>
<td>10 051</td>
<td>30 829</td>
<td>23 389</td>
<td>21 890</td>
<td>-8 939 (-29%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asylum and Migration Fund</td>
<td>6 745</td>
<td>9 205</td>
<td>9 205</td>
<td>8 705</td>
<td>-500 (-5.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[3 682 allocated to the thematic facility]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[3 182 allocated to the thematic facility]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One new proposal put forward in the February 2020 negotiating box is to increase funding allocations for Cyprus, Malta and Greece, countries which received the highest number of asylum applications in 2018-19. The allocation for each of these countries would amount to EUR 25M.

The AMF regulation is still unfinished business of the European Parliament. The first reading in March 2019 saw a number of amendments reinforcing the regional role. However, it is still unclear if and when the text will go to a second reading.
European and Structural Investment Funds

All structural funds may be used to provide support for medium and long-term integration, the main ones being:

- ESF+ social inclusion and integration into labour market. 25% is currently earmarked for migrant integration;
- ERDF: Same scope of interventions as the current period with close link to AMF. It is necessary still to clarify how territorial cooperation programmes will deal with migration;
- EAFRD: integration of migrants, notably under Priority 6 'Promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas'.

Negotiations involving the European Parliament and the Council over the ESF+, the ERDF and the EAFRD are still ongoing. They are expected to be concluded at the end of the year after an overall deal is reached on the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2021-2027.

NDICI


The draft NDICI regulation foresees an earmarking of 10% to tackle the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement and to support migration management and governance including the protection of refugees and migrants’ rights

European Commission’s original proposed breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument</th>
<th>80,500</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Geographic programmes</td>
<td>68,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood</td>
<td>22,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>32,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia and the Pacific</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americas and Caribbean</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Thematic programmes</td>
<td>7,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Rights and Democracy</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Society Organisations</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stability and Peace</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Challenges</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Rapid response</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Emerging challenges and priorities cushion</td>
<td>10,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Complementary European Instrument for Nuclear Safety</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Instrument for Pre-accession</td>
<td>14,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Humanitarian aid</td>
<td>11,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Overseas countries and territories (incl. Greenland)</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Other</td>
<td>1,070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Decentralised agencies</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Margin</td>
<td>3,283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>123,002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In its resolution voted in March 2019 the European Parliament included a large number of amendments referring to local authorities (taken to mean all sub-state levels of government including regions), not least including them alongside civil society organisations as beneficiaries of thematic programme (b) Civil Society Organisations AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES (Am. 87). It proposes an allocation of EUR 443 million in 2018 prices (EUR 500 million in current prices) [0.54 %] for LAs, [Am. 107]

It is still not clear what could be the link between this thematic programme and support for regional action directly linked to migration under the other strands dealing with migration, e.g. migration as a specific topic under the Global Challenges thematic programme, the Rapid Response heading and Emerging Challenges and Priorities cushion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Heading 6: Europe and the World Heading</th>
<th>EC proposal</th>
<th>FI PRES Negotiation-Box (Dec’19)</th>
<th>EUCO PRES Negotiation-Box (Feb’20)</th>
<th>Change (EUCO Pres vs EC proposal)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument</td>
<td>108 929</td>
<td>103 217</td>
<td>101 905</td>
<td>-7 024 (-6.45%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79 216</td>
<td>75 492</td>
<td>75 492</td>
<td>-3 724 (-4.7%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CPMR Outlook

- Continue monitoring the negotiations on EU budget and regulations on financial instruments related to migration to ensure the allocations are in line with regional needs.
- Highlight the concern of access to funding by the more developed regions which have lower allocations under the structural investment funds but are receiving the highest number of migrants.
- Clarify how territorial cooperation programmes will deal with migration.
- Seek clarification on support for regional authorities under the NDICI for action to tackle root causes of irregular migration.
- Ensure that regions can be involved in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the different programmes.

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.

Rond-Point Schuman | 1040 Brussels, BELGIUM
info@crpm.org | +32 (0)2 612 17 00

6, Rue Saint-Martin | 35700 Rennes, FRANCE (siège)
info@crpm.org | +33 (0)2 99 35 40 50