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**MEETING OF THE
CPMR TASK FORCE ON MIGRATION MANAGEMENT
- BRUSSELS, 14 OCTOBER 2015 -**

- MINUTES -

Participants:

Regional representatives

Annika ANNERBY JANSSON, Vice-President Region Skåne
Maria LINDBOM, Senior Advisor International Relations, Region Skåne
Nikos KOSTOPOULOS, Executive Secretary North Aegean Region
Nikos LAMPROPOULOS, Brussels Representative, North Aegean Region
Georgios ALEXAKIS, Crete Region, CPMR Vice-President
Dimitris ANDROUTSOS, Crete Region Brussels Office
Charoula GIASIRANI, Commissioner for EU issues & voluntary, South Aegean Region
Emmeline ALLIOUX, Director, Provence-Alpes-Côtes d'Azur Brussels Delegation
Maëlle UNSTAD, intern, Languedoc Roussillon
M^a Elena FERRANDO CALATAYUD, Directora General de Inclusión Social, Conselleria de Igualdad y Políticas Inclusivas, Generalitat Valenciana
M^a José LÓPEZ SARRIÓN, Técnico de la Dirección General de Inclusión Social, Generalitat Valenciana
Regina LAGUNA MICÓ, DG EU Relations, Generalitat Valenciana
Gustavo MARTINIE, Director Valencia Brussels Office
Romina CALVET, EU Adviser, Catalan Government Representation in Brussels
Nadan PETROVIC, IPA-JTS Coordinator, Abruzzo
Assunta JANNI, Office Manager, Abruzzo
Monika BERNHARDT, Veneto Region
Johannes LENSCHOW, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Brussels Office (observer)

By teleconference

Dimitris KARAMPOULAS, Expert collaborator of Head of Region Western Greece
Melanie SILVA, Services Director, Directorate of Emigration, Immigration and Return Services, Azores Government
Isabel SEGURA, DG Migration Policies, Junta de Andalucía

European Commission

Andor URMOS, DG REGIO Competence Centre H1, Inclusive Growth, Territorial and Urban Development

CPMR

Eleni MARIANO, CPMR Secretary General

Alexis CHATZIMPIROS, Responsible for the Task Force at CPMR General Secretariat

Nicolas BROOKES, Director, Cohesion Policy

Davide STRANGIS, Executive Secretary, CPMR Inter-Mediterranean Commission

Kate CLARKE, Executive Secretary, CPMR North Sea Commission

Åsa BJERING, Executive Secretary, CPMR Baltic Sea Commission

Pascale CROISE, PA to the Secretary General

Claire STREET, Policy Assistant, CPMR General Secretariat (by teleconference)

Apologies:

Bruno CORTESE, Sicily Region

Ilia MAZZONE, Sicily-COPPEM

Xavier ALONSO, Generalitat de Catalunya

Gozo

Note: Sicily is the Leading Region of the Task force, Skåne is the political rapporteur at CPMR Political Bureau Level.

All useful information for the Task Force is available in the Dropbox “CPMR-Migration” ([LINK](#))

1 - Welcome & Adoption of minutes

Alexis Chatzimpiros, responsible for the Migration Task Force at the CPMR Secretariat, welcomed participants to the meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2015 were approved

- **Link to [Minutes](#)**

2 - Update on the EU agenda on migration

Alexis Chatzimpiros introduced the meeting, stating that it is difficult to reflect the exact current situation since the migration agenda is evolving so quickly.

The response from the EU level had been disappointing at first, but countries were now putting in place ambitious targets of numbers to welcome migrants and there were some initial good signs for a common EU approach.

The Regions are particularly interested in the issues of reception and integration. They are asking for more support in particular to manage emergencies especially in Regions from the Mediterranean.

The CPMR had been trying to reach Commissioner Avramopoulos, President Juncker and President Schultz to bring them to our meetings.

Dimitris Karampoulos (Western Greece) referred to Vice-President Mogherini’s address to the Committee of the Regions plenary where she stated that we must think continent and plan regionally and locally. This gave reason for hope and he urged to keep up the pressure to have a focus on abilities and capacities especially in the Mediterranean.

Emmeline Allieux (PACA) mentioned the upcoming summit in Malta in Valletta in November. As regions, we can give an input towards the preparation of this event. A draft agreement was being discussed in the Council within the Friends of the Presidency group chaired by French Ambassador, Pierre Vimont. It will be difficult to get hold of this agreement **but it is possible to pass on important messages from the Regions**. Many issues will be covered at this summit where the African side will also be important in terms of development aid in particular.

Davide Strangis (CPMR-IMC) stated that President Vauzelle had sent a letter to Ambassador Vimont and the CPMR had also written to the Council suggesting that regions should participate alongside their national level.

For reference

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/migratory-pressures/>

http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/migration/index_en.htm

3 - Update on action points proposed in the CPMR meeting of 10 September: Secretariat and member-regions

- Link to [Debriefing note](#)

Alexis Chatzimpiros ran quickly through the points raised in the debriefing note.

The proposal to coordinate actions to allow the voice of the Regions to be heard in the Valletta Summit was indeed a point included in the debriefing note of preparatory meeting for this Task Force.

There had been a press release and an article published as well as the organisation of a meeting at the European Parliament due to take place in the afternoon of 14 October organised jointly by CEMR, Eurocities and the CPMR and its member regions of North Aegean, Sicily and Calabria. President Juncker had been invited to come for a 5-minute handshake with regional presidents during this event, but had declined. CPMR will probably send a follow-up letter.

The “We are all Mediterranean” campaign (<http://tousmediterraneens.com/>) had raised more than 1200 signatures mostly from regional governments and representatives of the French parliament. However, this was still not good enough. It was proposed to use social media to reach 10000 signatures by the CPMR General Assembly in early November. The CPMR is asking regions to disseminate the campaign through their own channels, for example by organising events at local level under the umbrella of the campaign. PACA has already done much in this regard. It is also suggested to try and obtain testimonials from cultural or sports personalities, etc. to give more visibility to the campaign. The purpose of the campaign is to help legitimise regions in this topic.

Dimitris Karampoulos (Western Greece) encouraged using the twitter hashtag massively and Emmeline Allieux (PACA) suggested disseminating via the Brussels newsletter.

Annika Annerby Jansson (Region Skåne), pointed out that the situation is changing a lot. The campaign is strengthening efforts, but it must not shadow the fact that the migration crisis is no longer only a Mediterranean issue. Sweden is in same situation as some Mediterranean countries.

Davide Strangis replied that the concept of campaign is in the text. It is clear that we are calling for broader solidarity concerning every European country.

4 - Input received from member-regions through the questionnaire – First output

The questionnaire sent to Regions of the Task Force aims to collect good practices addressing the arrival, reception and integration of migrants. At present we have received around ten good practices. The inputs are available to members from the Dropbox ([Link to contributions](#))

Isabel Segura (Andalucia) mentioned that the Region had been seriously working on migration policy since the 1990's. Since she had only recently taken up her position, she had not had time to reply to the questionnaire but would send her contribution shortly after this meeting.

Further contributions from Regions are welcome ([Link to questionnaire: EN - FR](#))

5 - CPMR draft Policy Paper for submission to the General Assembly (5-6 November, Florence)

Alexis Chatzimpiros (CPMR) thanked members for their contributions to the draft policy paper. The document was being translated into 4 languages to be submitted to the General Assembly in Florence.

Annika Annerby Jansson (Region Skåne) wished to make two additions to the text

1. mention the positive effects of migration (development, demography, growing retired population in Europe, using migrants' skills)
2. highlight that the problem is no longer confined to the Mediterranean. Integration is a big issue (e.g. in Germany). Sweden is the country receiving the most migrants per capita (2-3 thousand a day). This is a complicated world issue that Europe cannot solve alone.

Alexis Chatzimpiros replied that because of the nature of the issue, we would try to incorporate slight amendments internally before the deadline for sending the final version to all member Regions ahead of the General Assembly.

For the sake of clarity, Emmeline Allieux (PACA) wished to reformulate the text of the third bullet point under "**and impress upon the Commission to**" on page three. Instead of "Reconsider to anticipate the redirection of the currently unspent funds ... towards priorities of the Migration agenda", she suggested using the wording facilitate the redirection...

6 - Discussion on ideas for cooperation between Regions

MIPEX-R

Six months ago Catalonia had put forward a proposal MIPEX-R (Migrant Integration Policy Index for Regions). Unfortunately Xavier Alonso who is dealing with the project could not be present at the meeting, but he had forwarded to CPMR Secretariat some information to share with the Task Force members.

Link to Documents: [Powerpoint Presentation](#) - [Background Note](#)

Catalonia wished to have conversation by skype or a meeting to discuss the new situation and renewed proposal. The first step of the proposal was to have a brainstorming session to see if there was a real possibility for comparison with an integration index in different regions and if the project

was viable. If so, 6-7 regions were needed to constitute a core group by the beginning of 2016. Catalonia would be in Florence, where regions could have the opportunity to discuss in more detail.

NORTH AEGEAN PROPOSALS

Nikos Lampropoulos (North Aegean) put forward a couple of ideas on how to cooperate together.

First Proposal

Commissioner Cretu had announced that it is possible to amend existing programmes (Operational programmes and also cross-border and transnational programmes) to include migration as one of the priorities, either adding as a new priority or linking with existing priorities. This was not an easy task since programmes had only just been approved and it was necessary to mobilise technical expertise. However, the CPMR Task Force could provide expertise and support to regions wishing to make these kinds of changes. It was suggested to start with cross-border programmes as these would be easier (e.g. Greece-Italy, Greece-Cyprus...). It is proposed to create a small team to take a look at the programmes to see how to make the necessary changes taking into account budget and other priorities. It was important to act immediately to take advantage of Cretu's offer of flexibility. Alexis Chatzimpiros stated that this was precisely the reason for inviting the European Commission to this meeting to debate with the Regions and give guidance on how to implement the flexibility announced by the Commissioner.

Davide Strangis (CPMR-IMC) confirmed that this was an interesting proposal and that action on migration under social improvement objectives and cohesion policy should not be a problem. However territorial cooperation in general was more complicated as social issues were not covered by the programmes. It was a good idea to combine the expertise of Managing Authorities involved in Cross-border, transnational and neighbourhood programmes.

Nikos Lampropoulos continued by added that political back-up was also needed, since at the end of the day it was a political decision. For this, he recommended focusing on one or two programmes we know could be successful in order to use them as best examples to gain support.

Annika Annerby Jansson (Region Skåne) believed it was a good idea to have common formulas that could be used. The H2020 work programme has included the impact of migration in regions.

Nicolas Brookes (CPMR) stated that this was an excellent idea and this kind of technical exercise suited what CPMR does in order to translate words into action. He looked forward to hearing from the European Commission.

Nikos Lampropoulos informed that no real instructions had been forthcoming as yet from DG Regio.

Nicolas Brookes stated that it was important to take this opportunity and suggested that we should start with needs. We need support from the policy that can show measurable results.

Nikos Lampropoulos suggested to start drafting how we could work and depending on the needs, determine what we could tackle.

Davide Strangis proposed to try to identify hotspots where the priorities were highest. There could be a linkage between existing priorities and migration. We should evaluate and propose solutions for integrating migration as a complementary topic. We needed to identify the kind of projects that could be funded, avoiding those already financed by other funds. He recalled that there was no money to fund interregional cooperation.

Charoula Giasirani (South Aegean - Rhodes island) believed that while this was an excellent proposal, the best solution to cope with the emergency situation such as faced in South Aegean Region was to have direct funding from the EC. She mentioned that the Governor of her Region had invited Commissioners Avramopoulos and Timmermans to see what was happening on the ground. South Aegean was facing a huge influx of refugees and migrants but lacked funding to cope with the situation.

Nadan Petrovic (Abruzzo Region and coordinator of the Adriatic Programme involving 8 Member States) raised two points. Firstly, regarding the comments from South Aegean, in his understanding only emergency measures could benefit from direct funding from the DG HOME. The programme he was managing was different. This was a 6-year programming terminating in 2016. His question was whether this programme could include migration as an additional measure within a 1-year period. The migration part was relatively new, but all the countries in the programme were investing in it as a priority.

Emmeline Allieux (PACA) indicated that a lot of technical work was required and that Regions needed reassurance from the EC, notably on eligibility issues regarding infrastructures to receive migrants. The Commission needed to have an open mind and understand that it was politically good for them.

Charoula Giasirani (South Aegean) insisted again that structural funds were not the only answer and that there was a need for direct EU funding. The mid-term review of the EU budget could provide an opportunity to be exploited.

Eleni Marianou (CPMR) indicated that following Commissioner Cretu's announcement, DG REGIO's services were working on a list of infrastructure projects or actions that could be accepted for funding on migration to make it easier for users to understand what is eligible or not under the structural funds.

Nikos Lampropoulos (North Aegean) pointed out that DG REGIO was working more on national structural funds rather than cross-border programmes.

Dimitris Karampoulos (Western Greece) explained that migration was a multilevel problem: firstly the emergency of reception and providing initial help. Then the issue of mid-term / long term integration of migrants remaining in the regions. ESF funds were available for integration, but a different instrument was needed for emergency reception. He agreed with the proposals from North Aegean, but Regions like his are facing the emergency of arrivals in real time and should ask for direct financing for infrastructures for accommodation, health care, food distribution. Money should be coming from different instruments.

Second Proposal

The second proposal was more vague and concerned coordination among regions. Migrants are crossing different regions and the idea is to monitor these flows in order to prepare for arrivals. Countries are not sharing information with other countries and also their own regional and local authorities. It would be appropriate to set up an early warning system to be able to plan the reception of migrants in better conditions, solving issues on local level. Emergency assistance could be requested from AMIF to create a system for predicting migration flows and which allows information to be exchanged immediately helping to see the problem on a regional level (how many migrants are staying, where others are going, etc.). This would be coordinated by CPMR. The idea still needed to be clarified, but if there was interest from the Regions, it could be possible to set up a pilot project for 6 months to see if it works. Support for the project could then be requested from the European Commission.

Eleni Marianou mentioned that during the meeting with President Schultz at the European Parliament in May, the possibility of pilot projects was raised. Schultz was aware and happy to proceed through the European Parliament together with the Commission for pilot funding to understand what is already in place and follow what others have been doing successfully. A pilot action with DG HOME/REGIO funded through the budget line could be prepared for the next programme in 2017.

Davide Strangis mentioned funds and linkage with migration with a REGIO and HOME pilot experience on an emergency border-specific initiative.

South Aegean once again stressed that the reality is very different and very urgent. Thousands were arriving and there were no resources to care for them. The Greek government has done nothing, the Regions have no funding and everything is managed by volunteers. This was one of the biggest disasters and would be getting worse with the arrival of winter.

Abruzzo mentioned that two MEPs would be presenting a report on migration flows in the Mediterranean with a medium and long-term perspective. The respective roles of the State and the regions should not be confused. Regions and local authorities need coordination with their Member States.

A proposal was put to Eleni Marianou to create a delegation of regions to go to countries and see the situation at first hand in a study visit that could be part of exchanges on the reality.

7. EXCHANGE WITH DG REGIO

Andor Urmos, DG REGIO Competence Centre H1, Inclusive Growth, Territorial and Urban Development, was invited to elaborate on Commissioner Cretu's announcements and discuss the possibilities offered to refocus 2014-2020 operational programmes to address migration issues.

Mr Urmos recalled first that DG HOME was responsible for the overall coordination concerning migration, but here we were talking only about funding.

When the structural funds were discussed in 2012, we were not aware of the migration crisis as we are today. In 2012, the negotiations already included measures to address migration issues for two countries - Italy and Greece - which already identified in the programme the needs, measures and quantified amounts required to tackle migration. For other member states there are no specific targeted measures. Although some member states have indicated the most important target groups (migrants, refugees, asylum seekers...), migration is included under the social inclusion umbrella so it is not known how much money is used to for this.

The EC had issued two communications in 2015 (May and September) in light of the dramatic events occurring in 2015 in the Mediterranean and Eastern European countries. The September communication attempts to identify the urgent steps that need to be taken in the next 6 months.

It is clear that Member States will reopen negotiations on the Structural Funds. Germany for example will probably need to put more specific focus on migrants than before. Some German regions want to rethink measures to reallocate resources (shelter/accommodation as a first priority). Funding is needed for infrastructure developments (housing, social, health care). DG EMPL can fund soft measures (training etc.).

Another recent issue is mapping. The Red Cross has begun mapping needs in the Member States and has identified housing as an utmost priority. However this is not exhaustive and needs to be completed by the relevant national/regional authorities.

Commissioner Cretu is open to discuss any other measure and we should think about the important political message when renegotiating programmes.

The programmes can in fact be modified at any moment in accordance with the legal provisions adopted in 2013. No change is therefore required to the legal environment which remains applicable.

The Commission's view is that proper mapping needs to be done as soon as possible by the member states or regions to identify the most important priorities on the ground. As well as shelter, these could also include vocational training /integration measures. Umbrella terms, such as social inclusion allow member states to change the shape of the programme within the current framework. Some Scandinavian member states have not put specific focus on social inclusion when it comes to infrastructure development. Money is not allocated for this. If Sweden wishes to use the ERDF for accommodation, they must amend their programme, which for the moment is more focused on energy efficiency and transport infrastructures.

The main message therefore is:

- Regions can amend their programmes
- But first a needs assessment (mapping) is necessary to identify basic needs and quantifiable figures.
- Once this is done they can come back to the Commission with proposals.

QUESTION.

Emmeline Allieux (PACA) raised two questions

1. Could the EC provide regions with legal certainty regarding the eligibility of infrastructures under the SF programmes?
2. Given the urgency of the situation, is the EC considering a fast-track procedure for the amendment of the programmes?

ANSWER:

Firstly on infrastructure. While stressing that this was not an official position, Mr Urmos did not believe that the funding of basic infrastructure would be a problem, provided that it was contextualised and justified within the programme and strategies through figures, data, mapping, etc.

Regarding question on a fast-track procedure, Mr Urmos indicated that DG REGIO and EMPL were keen to introduce this, but he could not give further details for the moment.

QUESTION

Nicolas Brookes (CPMR) indicated that the CPMR and regions could discuss together to see what they could do in terms of mapping and quantifying needs and asked what proposals the Commission would like to see from the regions.

ANSWER

It could be helpful to have a common view gathered by CPMR. He encouraged to send proposals and discuss with the Commission. However this should be done without delay since even with a fast-track procedure, it would take time.

QUESTION

Nikos Lampropoulos (North Aegean). The Commission should make it clear to the states that it is the regions who finally deliver. We could come up with concrete proposals on what we can do as Regions and how fast we can do it.

ANSWER:

In accordance with the Treaty, the EC cannot impose measures on how to do the mapping. It can help, but it cannot be a legal obligation to Member States.

QUESTION

Davide Strangis (CPMR-IMC) asked how the EC sees the flexibility to amend programmes to include migration in the priorities. We could provide suggestions on in terms of the projects to be funded under national and regional OPs. Secondly, it is one thing to fund infrastructure within national programmes, but what about the transnational dimension? Can migration be included in cooperation programmes?

Nadan Petrovic (Abruzzo – IPA JTS) asked whether there was any room in the Adriatic programme due to end on 31 December 2016 to have a specific reference on migration.

ANSWER

On territorial cooperation. To clarify relations between mainstream programmes and territorial cooperation programmes +90% was allocated in mainstream programmes (national or regional). Territorial cooperation receives much less. Even at this moment CBC is targeting migration (for example the Hungarian and Serbian border). But only a small part of funds is available to tackle this. Other actions (e.g. shelter) cannot be done through ETC. Exchanges of good practice on training etc. could be possible through Urbact.

Concerning Adriatic programme, Mr Urmos suggested to check with competent colleagues, but was not 100% sure that everything could be managed in such a short time.

He mentioned that some member states had asked about using the remaining budget from the 2007-2013 programmes. The problem was timing, since there were only two months left. Taking account of the administrative burden this proposal was not realistic.

QUESTION

Emmeline Allieux (PACA) stressed that the question of timing was critical and we need the lightest procedure possible. A similar issue had come about with the EARDF. She asked about the idea of letters of comfort and if the EC could issue this kind of letter to give its OK in principle. While it did not give 100% legal certainty it could give assurance.

ANSWER

While Mr Urmos understood the points raised, the EC cannot amend legislative framework. To amend regulations takes minimum 2-3 months minimum (codecision) and a further 2 months for modifications to be able to reuse money. It was a pity but it was clear therefore that some money would be lost.

Focus will rather be given to the 2014-20 programming period.

QUESTION

In relation to soft measures and vocational training - also echoed by President Juncker's state of the Union address regarding employment of migrants - Davide Strangis (CPMR-IMC) asked about new solutions for self-employability such as microcredit programmes and micro-enterprises.

ANSWER

ERDF/ESF can be used for start-ups and it is possible to enlarge the scope of these measures. Renegotiation and reallocation is possible for this.

It is possible to seek complementarity with other funds including the DG HOME Asylum Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) - the main fund for emergency measures. It is necessary to reinforce synergies between funding while avoiding overlaps. It is true that AMIF can cover everything but it has less money.

QUESTION

Nikos Lampropoulos (North Aegean) asked that the ESF should unlink the migrant issue with the overall scope and objective. For example language courses for the migrant population currently arriving in Europe did not have the same format as conventional courses.

ANSWER

Mr Urmos doubted that this was possible.

QUESTION

Nikos Lampropoulos (North Aegean) pointed out that there was no EU strategy under the ESF on the provision of basic vocational training for migrants which was needed urgently. How could this be included?

ANSWER

If the need was put into context and justified with regard to access to the labour market it should not be a problem.

QUESTION

Nicolas Brookes asked about the midterm review of the Multi-Annual Financial Framework and how the migration issue would be addressed. He had heard that no budget ceilings would be moved and the budget would not be restructured.

ANSWER

Since the programmes had only just been launched it was too early to talk about this now. Some ESF MAs had already raised the question if there would be a specific fund for migration but this would not be the case. It was recommended to use existing budget well. He stressed that things were changing from one day to the next and in this context it is too difficult to predict what the situation would be in the future.

Alexis Chatzimpiros thanked Mr Urmos for contributing to the debate and answering questions, and Mr Urmos assured that DG REGIO would remain available to continue discussions.

8. TASK FORCE ACTION PLAN AND CALENDAR

Some amendments arising from the discussion would be included in the policy paper.

It was suggest to meet in the framework of the General Assembly on Wednesday 4 November in Florence from 18.00 to 19.00.

Emmeline Allieux (PACA) also suggested that contacts could be made with non-member Regions working effectively on migration (e.g. Bavaria) to invite them to future meetings as observers and share work. Davide Strangis added in this regard that we can involve experts from Regions other than CPMR.

Calendar

Ongoing	Collect data on Regional best practices on reception and integration of migrants through a template/questionnaire.
By 22 October	Final amendments to policy paper.
4 November (18.00-19.00) Florence	Physical meeting of Task Force
4-6 November (CPMR General Assembly)	Session on migration Assessment of 1st big initiative of Med Campaign WAAM. Communication of results of other meetings
12-14 Nov	Valletta Summit (MT)
Between now and early 2016	Assess possibilities of projects (MIPEX R, Horizon 2020 Neighbourhood Policy)

Action List

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>When</i>
Task Force	Circulate conclusions of TF meeting	CPMR Secretariat	23 Oct
	Mobilise other CPMR regions to join TF (especially N. European) for better balance	CPMR Secretariat	GA Florence
Best Practices	Provide responses to questionnaire / template. Submit short summaries (in English if possible) of best practices to be shared with the Task Force	TF Members	Ongoing
Cooperation/ Projects	Invitation to MIPEX-R Event to be held January 2016 CPMR will circulate to members	Catalonia & CPMR Secretariat	Nov tbc
	draft a summary of an H2020 project on mass migration and making situations more stable in countries of origin/ innovation to improve system of managing migration	PACA/Skåne	Beg. Oct
	Make links with CPMR External Cooperation Group on Decentralised Cooperation aspect of migration issue	CPMR Secretariat	GA Florence
	Identify pilot actions under ENP	CPMR/IMC	GA Florence
Events & WAAM campaign	Dissemination of WAAM campaign (organisation of awareness raising events, signing of petition)	All TF members	ongoing
Advocacy & Policy Positions	Submit policy paper to CPMR members ahead of GA 4-6 Nov Tuscany	CPMR Secretariat	22 Oct
	Develop contacts with EC, EP, Council for lobbying actions	CPMR Secretariat	ongoing