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## Draft Minutes

# CPMR MIGRATION TASK FORCE MEETING

**2 November 2016 (14.00-15.00) – Ponta Delgada (Azores, Portugal)**

**Venue:** Room 2, “Pavilhão do Mar” (Avenida Infante Dom Henrique, 9500 Ponta Delgada)

## PARTICIPANTS

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>AZORES</b>               | Melanie SILVA, Services Director, Directorate of Emigration, Immigration and Return Services  |
| <b>BRITTANY</b>             | Claire LE TERTRE, EU Cooperation Programmes Officer   |
| <b>CAMPANIA</b>             | Patrizia LAGANA', Advisor to Serena Angioli   |
| <b>NORRBOTTEN</b>           | Anders ÖBERG, Board Member of the County Council  |
| <b>NORTH AEGEAN</b>         | Nikos LAMPROPOULOS, Brussels Representative   |
| <b>PELOPONNESE</b>          | Apostolos PAPAFOTIOU, Regional Councillor in charge of International Affairs and EU Programmes  |
| <b>SKÅNE</b>                | Annika ANNERBY JANSSON, Vice-President<br>Maria LINDBOM, Senior Advisor International Relations   |
| <b>VALENCIA</b>             | Daríá TERRÁDEZ SALOM, Director General of EU Relations<br>Ana ENGUÍDANOS, Head of External Action, Directorate General of EU Relations  |
| <b>WESTERN GREECE</b>       | Dimitris KARAMPOULAS, Expert collaborator of Head of Region   |
| <b>CPMR<br/>SECRETARIAT</b> | Alexis CHATZIMPIROS, Responsible for the Task Force<br>Davide STRANGIS, Executive Secretary, CPMR Inter-Mediterranean Commission<br>Nicolas BROOKES, CPMR Director for Cohesion Policy<br>Claire STREET, Policy Assistant |

## 1. Update on the developments at EU level:

Alexis Chatzimpiros presented the current state of play regarding EU legislation and the reform of the Common Asylum System.

Main points of the reform:

- Asylum seekers cannot not be kept in the EU indefinitely and international protection should therefore only last the time it is needed.
- Limitations have been imposed on the access of asylum seekers to the labour market (6-month time limit).
- Countries are not allowed to issue permanent residence permits
- Family unification is becoming more difficult.
- Make secondary movement more difficult

He also made reference to the border controls that have been introduced in the Schengen area to block the Balkan route and to the recent decision of the EU Council to maintain these restrictions.

Medium and long term integration processes may be affected by these EU measures. This was pointed out in amendments to the Migration Section in the CPMR Final Declaration.

Members were invited to consult an interesting paper on this topic issued by the Migration Policy Group.

### **REFERENCES**

- DG HOME, European Agenda on Migration:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/proposal-implementation-package/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/proposal-implementation-package/index_en.htm)
- EC Communication [Towards a reform of the common European asylum system and enhancing legal avenues to Europe](#), published on 6 April 2016
- Document from the Migration Policy Group: [New asylum recast may undermine the EU's greatest impact on refugee integration](#)

### **Discussion**

#### **Nikos Lampropoulos, North Aegean:**

The situation in the North Aegean region was not as critical as in the previous year. There were currently around 150 arrivals daily. Despite the agreement with Turkey numbers were still increasing. The agreement between Greece and Turkey was not stable and he was worried about how the situation would develop. Finally, the reallocation programme was still not performing.

He regretted that he could not make a more positive contribution to the debate.

#### **Annika Annerby Janssen, Skåne:**

Northern European countries had received considerably fewer migrants than in 2015. The Swedish government was continuing its border and ID controls which was controversial in the southern part of the country because of the difficulties it was creating for commuting between Sweden and Denmark.

**Dària Terradez, Valencia:**

Valencia region had been fostering a system to receive refugees but had not received authorisation from the central state which has the competencies for asylum and migration.

She wanted the CPMR to call on the European Commission to push member states to have more solidarity and allow such regional initiatives.

**Apostolos Papafotiou, Peloponnese:**

Although the Peloponnese was not the first gateway for migrants, problems were arising from secondary movements. There were some 10 000 migrants in the region but few wished to stay and were trying to make their way to other EU countries.

He pointed out that the problem was a global one and could not be solved only by EU countries. All world countries need to come together to solve the problem.

He also called for a more long-term vision, since migration flows to Europe would continue to increase over the next 10 years.

**Dimitris Karampoulas, Western Greece:**

The principle of free movement and the social model of which Europe was proud were being undermined thus causing serious challenges to the common EU project. The lack of consensus between governments and increasing caution and rejection of migrants was a problem. The campaign “We are All Mediterranean” highlighted the problem from a humanitarian point of view and he believed that such political initiatives could be continued.

**2. Update on the CPMR work:****Inter-regional Cooperation:**

The relocation scheme was underperforming having reached less than 2% of the target. Regional initiatives on this issue had been blocked at state level and therefore could not be implemented.

The President of Catalonia had mentioned this state of affairs in a letter to Commissioner Avramopoulos and it was also discussed during a meeting with President Juncker attended by CPMR Secretary General, Eleni Marianou and Rena Dourou, Governor of Attica. The CPMR will continue to promote the regional cause.

**Humanitarian Corridors and Visas:**

LINK to [Background Document](#)

The CPMR had been checking the provisions currently in place on humanitarian corridors and visas for regular migration and exploring whether there were cases in which regions could have a role. We looked at a specific example of a programme set up by NGOs in Italy. However the programme depends on the Italian state which ultimately decides on whether applicants for regular visas should be granted humanitarian visa.

Unfortunately, no possibilities for regional intervention were identified for the time being.

## **Dialogue with UNHCR:**

The CPMR was discussing with the United Nations Refugee Agency to explore potential synergies and see if Regions could have a role in cooperation with UNCHR.

## **Funding:**

The note on funding opportunities had been updated. ([LINK to document](#))

More specifically regarding **Structural Funds**, the CPMR needs to consider how these have been used so far for migration and put forward views for post-2020. The CPMR invites members to submit ideas to feed into a position paper for the CPMR Political Bureau next March.

Europe is not united on how to tackle the issue. There is opposition between the Visegrad group and other Member States. Many different ideas are floating about on how to support or fund migration but nothing concrete has been defined. Even within the European Commission there are differing views. Commissioner Cretu supports having everything under Cohesion Policy while others support the idea of a different budget for migration. Some are also in favour of separating funding for reception and funding for integration.

It is therefore a timely opportunity for the CPMR to promote its views.

## **Discussion**

### **Dimitris Karampoulas, Western Greece**

All needs had to be covered with the same envelope which would be even smaller after Brexit. He believed a new dedicated budget line for migration was needed.

### **Nicolas Brookes, CPMR Director in charge of Cohesion**

There were some ideas circulating to give a bigger share of Cohesion Policy funding to Member States receiving large numbers of refugees.

### **Claire Le Tertre, Brittany**

She agreed that a separate budget was needed. It was not possible to answer to emergency situations within European territorial cooperation projects, since the time frame was too long. Actions should not be confined by cohesion policy rules.

### **Annika Annerby Janssen, Skåne:**

Regions need two different types of support: one for immediate emergency and another for integration.

Making more money available from the European Structural Investment Fund would certainly help regions already receiving asylum seekers, However, she did not believe that it would solve the problem, since Regions that did not want to receive migrants would not be incited to do so simply by providing more funding.

Also she raised the problem of migrants that do not succeed in obtaining permits. It has always been a problem, but it is currently getting worse. Regions need to consider how to deal with this category of irregular migrants.

### **Davide Strangis, Executive Secretary of the Intermediterranean Commission**

He mentioned some initiatives in the Mediterranean under EU programmes.

A “platform project” under **Priority Axis 4 of the MED Programme concerning the “Governance for a shared Mediterranean Sea”**. The States will discuss about migration challenges (possibly underlining the best practices in cross border projects, linking with Interact activities). These discussions will hopefully help the states and the regions to improve the situation in the long run.

There are ongoing discussions on how to adapt the **ADRION Interreg programme** (through its axis 4 on governance) and **EUSAIR strategy** to migration challenges also. IPA Adriatic has also discussed this possibility related to humanitarian emergency (apparently without success for the time being).

Possibly, the added value of Interreg programmes could be to achieve a better and more standardised level of reception and integration in the territories through the benchmarking of needs, best practices and experiences and maybe some capacity building actions.

The **Trust Fund for Africa** approved at the Valetta summit last year with an envelope of €1.8 billion has received a supplementary contribution of €83 million.

All its windows are important but the **Window for North Africa** provides already some opportunities to cooperate. It is managed directly by the Spanish State, which has a driving influence on actions funded together with DG NEAR and mainly the EU delegation in Morocco and Tunisia.

The Cooperation agency of Catalonia has been discussing with the Spanish Cooperation Agency, the UNDP and NOVACT NGO about a joint project using this window for the promotion of social cohesion and the socio-economic opportunities in the Maghreb area. There are two main purposes behind it:

- socio-economic development, creation of a forum and dialogues between countries of transit, origin and destination of migrants with the aim of improving the living conditions and, the integration policies (e.g. transforming the origin/transit countries into counties of destination of migrants)
- anti-radicalisation on the ground, linked to security policies.

The CPMR is being asked to participate and gather possibly some other regions (mainly Italian ones) to participate in the socio-economic/integration activities. If the project proves interesting it could be helpful for the TF activities. Besides perhaps it would be possible to involve other regions from the North or with a special role. This is still not sure but open to discussion.

Duration could be 40 months, the budget 2-4 M euro. 100% funded by the Trust fund, without co-funding (which is very interesting).

Furthermore, the CPMR was awaiting answers to 2 projects submitted under the **Asylum Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF)**: one on integration to the labour market (AMIF call on integration managed by EC) and another on emergency social and health integration (AMIF call managed by the Italian State).

Two projects under **Europeaid** had not been approved because one of the partners had infringed requirements. However, one of the project ideas is being partially re-used for the trust fund application.

UCLG is developing a project on City to City Migration and some synergies could be evaluated with the TF works and MIPEX – REG. They will invite us to a seminar to be held in Tangiers at the end of November.

### 3. MIPEX-R Project

Partners: Catalonia (co-leader), Abruzzo, Andalucia, Basque Country, Campania, Ionian Islands, Skåne, South Aegean.

Owing to some administrative difficulties within Catalonia, Phase 1 of the project had been delayed. This had caused some issues among partners about regional budgets which had been committed in 2016 and could not be carried over to 2017.

The CPMR Secretariat would ask Catalonia and CIDOB to start the administrative procedure immediately so that financial payments from regions that need to do so could be finalised before the end of 2016 if possible.

All regions except from Abruzzo have confirmed their agreement on the management and agreement procedures for the 1<sup>st</sup> phase, proposed by CIDOB.

Davide Strangis mentioned that Emilia Romagna, Calabria, Tuscany are also evaluating to join the project but they are finding difficulties concerning the funding resources. He also informed that the Committee of the Regions was interested in finding a synergy with the project (and that DG HOME had also expressed an interest months ago during the TF meeting in Brussels). We will have to check again these possibilities.

### 4. CPMR Final Declaration

[LINK to Final Declaration adopted by the CPMR General Assembly](#)

Members were informed of amendments received to the section on Migration in the Final Declaration.

The ones coming from Skåne and Murcia were explained and agreed on their principles together with some others coming from Catalonia and Valencia.

There was some discussion about the legitimacy of Catalonia's addition to point 38:

*Calls on the Commission the recognition of the need that the different European regions can reach mutual agreements to undertake actions of reception and integration of asylum seekers and refugees. In the same sense, regional authorities should share responsibilities on reception and integration of people using humanitarian corridors.*

since from a legislative point of view it was not possible to have mutual agreements between national governments and regions since only the State level could decide on refugee status.

All other amendments were considered acceptable with some slight adjustments to be discussed during the Final Declaration overview group synthesis meeting.