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European Committee
of the Regions

Minutes

HIGH LEVEL CONFERENCE MIGRATION AND ASYLUM: TOWARDS A MULTILEVEL GOVERNANCE APPROACH

23 April 2018, Brussels (BELGIUM)

OPENING SESSION: THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGENDA 2015 AND THE RECAST CEAS - CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE OF EUROPE AND ITS NEIGHBOURS

- **Rena Dourou**, Governor/President of the Region of Attica, representing the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

She thanked the speakers and participants and welcomed the close collaboration between the Region of Attica, the Committee of the Regions and the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) to organise the conference.

She stated that migration is not a crisis but a phenomenon. A crisis might explode, disappear and experience ups and downs whereas a phenomenon has a permanent nature. Migration issues have highlighted divisions across Europe and have been used by populist parties.

At present, regional authorities, such as in Italy and Greece, are facing this phenomenon by trying to maintain social cohesion and coping with xenophobia. Local authorities are the links of a chain, bringing together the three levels of governance: the EU, national and the local level.

Dealing with migration is dealing with human beings. With the situation in the Middle East we cannot afford to waste time. A new policy for asylum and migration is a real emergency, as the Dublin mechanism is failing. However, this situation should not question the European project as a whole and solutions need to be found. As an example, she referred to President Emmanuel Macron's speech before the European Parliament, where he mentioned the need for an EU policy on migration and the necessity to build an external cooperation based on solidarity. He also put forward the proposal to set up a European programme dedicated to local authorities for welcoming and looking after refugees.

As a representative of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, she presented the work done on migration policies by the organisation, which has been addressing the topic for the last 20 years. Within this Congress, Mrs Dourou chairs a working group which is drafting recommendations regarding accommodation for refugees. She highlighted that the responsibility to welcome, accommodate and integrate refugees and migrants lies firstly with mayors, governors, councillors and municipal advisers. This is why many mayors, such as the mayor of Lampedusa and the mayor of Calais have attended the meetings of the Council of Europe over the last 3 years.

Addressing the most urgent needs of people who have left everything is a fundamental challenge for local and regional leaders. They first need to protect their human rights and their dignity, to welcome and host them, while often facing shortages in terms of resources. Indeed, most of the shores are located in countries which have been through a major economic crisis.

She addressed the need for proper tools and the importance for regional and local authorities to have access to direct European funding. The Regions of Attica, Lazio and Sicily put forward this urgent request to the President of the European Parliament. She also mentioned that such requests are not only about money but also to face a lack of clear-cut legislation.

The issues related to migration and cross-border regions will be addressed by the Local and Regional Authorities Congress in November 2018 where it will set out a common policy. The aim is to have a holistic policy which will take into account all stakeholders in order to turn the phenomena into a stability factor for European society.

To conclude, she recalled the purpose of the conference: to have a public dialogue, not only to brainstorm but to reach tangible proposals and solutions.

- **Dimitrios Papadimoulis**, Vice President of the European Parliament

He felt the rise of migration flows in 2015 and 2016 could be likened to a “crash test” to gauge how EU societies are able to cope with migration issues.

He raised a few questions: To what extent has the EU been successful in dealing with migration? Has the EU complied with international conventions such as the Geneva Convention?

Looking at statistics and initiatives taken, he stressed that some communities such as in Greece or Italy have saved the EU’s honour by welcoming migrants and refugees in line with humanist values. On the other hand, he also mentioned the closure of the Balkans route and how the EU has tried to outsource the problem.

He pointed out the cleavage within the European family as well as institutional divisions concerning migration issues. He also mentioned the relocation plan of refugees and migrants set up by the European Commission. He said that in view of the initial objectives, the expected result has not been achieved.

He then looked at the case of Greece. The management of migration flows came on top of all the already existing issues linked to the economic crisis. One of the consequences has been the rise of extremist and xenophobic parties. The same situation can be seen in other parts of Europe where migration is high in the political agenda.

The European Parliament put forward many resolutions and supported a proportionate relocation policy. Unfortunately, it was not approved by the Council.

He called for a proper policy and incentives to urge EU countries to embrace initiatives. He believed that sanctions should be activated for Member States which are not complying with their commitments regarding migration.

He also stressed that regional and local authorities have to be acknowledged as key actors as they are at the forefront, facing migration issues on a daily basis. Therefore, they are the most appropriate to provide solutions.

- Video message from **Christos Stylianides**, EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid & Crisis Management

[\(link to the video\)](#)

- **Yoomi Renström**, Member of Ovanåker Municipal Council (SE), Member of the Committee of the Regions

She first said that migration was a highly ranked topic for European public opinion. According to the last Eurobarometer, when it comes to EU citizens' most important concern, migration came up first (40%), ahead of terrorism and the current economic situation.

She stressed that all levels of governance must be included in the work and the decision-making-process concerning migration issues. She called for an EU asylum system which will work in a long-term perspective.

She acknowledged that some good initiatives were taken at the EU level. On the other hand, she warned that pretending the situation is under control and solidarity exists between Member States on the matter was a mistake. It is not right either to pretend the Dublin mechanism works. It would also be wrong not to see that in some Members States, helping migrants is considered as a crime.

She raised the concern of the aging population of the European continent. She gave the example of an opinion poll carried out in Sweden. Citizens were asked if Sweden was welcoming enough migrants. The majority said yes. However, she suggested that the following question should have been asked first: "How will we solve the employment situation within 20 years when there will be more pensioners than working people in Sweden?" to help people think out of the box.

She believed that the economic and social costs of integrating migrants and refugees are less important today than the ones societies will have to pay if we fail to do this.

- **Ioannis Balafas**, Deputy Minister for Migration Policy, Greece

He made a general statement: Europe is at an historical crossroad, dealing with various crises, migration being one of them.

He stressed the need to make a choice in terms of how to manage these flows and that the conference was a great opportunity to start a dialogue between the various level of governance.

He then gave some details of the Greek migration/migration management policy. With a limited experience on migration up to 2015, the country is currently hosting 650 000 regular migrants and 15 000 asylum seekers.

The migration flows which started in 2015 are leading to more conservatism, racism and xenophobia within European Member states, creating tensions between the poorest citizens and migrants. The Greek government has had to find a way to secure a number of rights for migrants, to integrate them within society and to avoid discrimination at the same time

The idea was to find a new integration model based on a modern dialogue in order to reduce tensions and reinforce social cohesion. He stressed that local and regional authorities play a key role in this process by being involved in the drafting of the integration policy. The goal is to encourage cooperation between the various regions and to set up a network between the central level, the regions and the municipalities to promote the integration strategy.

The resources allocated to regional and local authorities also have to be increased to deal with migration, especially for regions which are hosting and welcoming a high number of migrants.

He then mentioned that regional authorities should be competent in the following fields related to migration: Access to training and education which will allow them to enter the labour market, social integration, health care and intercultural initiatives.

He concluded that Greece started from scratch in 2015 and that the country has now accumulated a certain level of experiences and expertise on migration issues.

- **Eleni Marianou**, CPMR Secretary General

She gave an overview of the work the CPMR is doing on migration issues.

Migration has become a new and key priority for the European Union and many Peripheral Maritime Regions, by their geographical location, have to face the reality and deal with migration on a daily basis.

The CPMR, via its Intermediterranean Commission, started to be active in 2014, shortly after the Lampedusa tragedy occurred. The CPMR launched a campaign called “we are all Mediterranean” to show its support to migrants. This Awareness campaign was the starting point for the creation of the CPMR Task Force dedicated to migration issues. Various CPMR member regions from the South and the North of Europe are involved in this Task Force which follows a solidarity-based approach.

The CPMR also fostered agreements between Spanish Regions, which had the capacities in place to welcome migrants, and Greek regions where the number of migrants was higher than their capacity to welcome them. Mrs Dourou, President of the Attica Region, also met with the President of the European Commission, Mr Junker, to raise awareness on the existence of these initiatives taken by regions and ask for the support of the European Commission.

Via the Migration Task force and based on a survey conducted among member regions, the CPMR produced an issue paper to map and identify the competences and experiences of Regions in terms of reception and integration of migrants. The CPMR also facilitates the exchange of knowledge and experiences on the matter and makes recommendations to fill the gaps and overcome obstacles and difficulties.

The CPMR also looked at the current financial instruments available at all levels to facilitate the integration of migrants in EU territories and was keeping a close eye on the next MFF period. The CPMR was also looking at the external dimension of the phenomena, in order to address the root causes of migration.

When it comes to migration, everybody’s contribution is more than needed, and regions needs to be taken into account as they play a key role and contribute towards finding solutions.

- **Anna Terrón**, President of Instrategies, CPMR Consultant on Migration.

(Link to the [issue paper](#))

She presented the main findings of the CPMR issue paper. Migration is a cross cutting and multilevel issue. Migration is under the competence of Member States. However, the results of the survey conducted by the CPMR shows that all regions have formal competences and practices on reception and accommodation of refugees and migrants. There are solid competencies and actions among regions in managing migration and implementing relevant EU legislation and programmes.

It is important to point out the territorial dimension of migration. Regions have to deal with refugees and migrants who are transiting or living in their territories and find solutions on the ground, even if migration is dealt with at the Member States level.

She stressed the importance of having data and sharing information on migrants between agencies and institutions not only in terms of Member States’ practices but also what is being done on the ground, at the regional and local level. This is why regions have to be considered as key players when looking at EU programmes and financial instruments dedicated to migration.

Migration should be included in 3 EU financial instruments. This is yet to be confirmed, depending on what the new MFF will look like. From a regional perspective, EU funds cannot only be devoted to security and

border management. They should also help to meet the immediate needs of refugees and migrants and tackle emergencies on the ground.

The vast majority of financial Instruments dedicated to migration and asylum will be in the hands of Member States. However, regions should be taken into consideration by EU institutions for direct management of funds. EU institutions should push Member States to recognise in their national programmes the role of regions in implementing EU legislation at territorial level.

Financial Instruments should include mid and long term intercultural and local development actions to foster social inclusion on the ground. It also should address the external dimension of migration and make sure development is the main driver. Regions can play an important role regarding territorial cooperation with neighbour countries.

The governance model for the cohesion fund needs to be kept as it is. However, Infrastructures to enhance reception capacity should be eligible, since many European regions are responsible for the reception of migrants and refugees.

The Asylum system should be recast, reframed and reshaped. A multi-level dimension need to be included to help coordinate all levels of administration in order to better welcome asylum seekers.

- **The Very Reverend Archimandrite Ioakeim Arhondos**

He said that the church always looks at the issue with love and an open heart. He also recalled that migrants and refugees are obliged to leave their homeland to escape unbearable life conditions. He concluded by saying that we have to look at the issue focusing on love and not on fears.

SESSION 2: RECEPTION AND INTEGRATION POLICIES – EXPERIENCES AND VISION TOWARDS A BETTER MULTILEVEL MANAGEMENT

- **Mercedes Bresso**, Member of the European Parliament (Chair and Moderator)

She introduced the session saying that Europe needs to adopt a multi-governance approach when dealing with migration issues, as local and regional authorities are at the forefront. If the urgency of the situation is often concentrated at the borders, the responsibilities are shared between all Member States, which are in the driver's seat. On the basis of the treaties, the EU can define general guidelines and ask Member States to adopt the necessary measures to provide financial support. Regions and local governments play a major role by applying reception and integration policies on the ground, with the help of NGOs and private bodies. Regional and local authorities need to be involved outside of their specific ministries. We should also foster the exchanges of experiences to tackle problems efficiently.

She gave some example in Italy where Regions are involved in welcoming and integrating migrants and refugees. Many initiatives were taken in the city of Bologna to welcome and integrate 200 000 asylum seekers, such as the signing of a contract to build a reception centre for refugees. Other initiatives and projects led by the academic community and housing agencies were also developed in the city of Milan, a central point crossed by many migrants and refugees wishing to go to Northern Europe. The region of Piedmont was recognised by the United Nation by showing that a dialogue between civil society and local authorities allows a better integration of migrants into the labour market. These initiatives and experiences conducted within regions as well as their results need to be shared.

When looking at migration issues, she stressed the need to focus on people. By working in an integrated way, very practical results can be achieved. Local authorities can have different approaches and answers to the issue. What matters is that all answers go in the same direction.

The new MFF will have to take into account needs related to reception and integration policy and find ways to gather financial resources to support it. Regional and local authorities as well as cities need to be the beneficiaries of such funds, as they are implementing policies on the ground. European institutions can lead the way by giving recommendations and examples. Regional and local authorities are the ones developing initiatives as they are dealing with the reception and the integration of refugees and migrants on a daily basis.

- **Paraskevi Michou**, Director General, DG Migration and Home Affairs of the European Commission

She focused her speech mainly on what has been done concerning the integration of refugees and migrants at European level.

The European Commission has dedicated 1.5 billion euros to support Member States to deal with the challenges of migration. The European Commission hopes to have a first basic line for the whole asylum system by June 2018 at the earliest, hopefully October 2018 at the latest.

Concerning migration management, the European Commission believes that integration cannot happen without the help of local authorities. Furthermore, civil society and citizens are also playing an important role to welcome and integrate migrants and refugees. Member States have to make sure they liaise with the various actors at all levels. Integration is part of the European Union's competences. The European Commission is investigating all the options necessary concerning integration in order to create added value.

According to last week's Eurobarometer, 69% of EU citizens think that integration of immigrants is a necessary investment in the long run for the EU society.

As the Director General of DG HOME dealing with migration and security at EU level, Mrs Michou stressed that acting on integration and social inclusion also helps to prevent risks of possible radicalisation of individuals. Nobody can link migration to security. However, if we fail to integrate twenty-two million third-country nationals legally living in the EU (4.2% of the total EU population) as well as people arriving in the EU territory, the cost we will pay will be much higher than what is needed to integrate them within our societies today.

Not all Member States have the same experience in welcoming and integrating migrants. It will be crucial to work all together through multicultural learning activities, platform for exchanges and training to ensure integration. This is where the European Union can intervene and be involved. The European Commission adopted an action plan on integration in 2016 as part of the migration agenda. The European Commission has put in place number of actions, all supported by EU funds. For example, the European Commission is working on labour market integration. One example is the "[employers together for integration](#)" initiative launched in March 2017. Several large companies have already signed up and have shown their commitment to support the integration of refugees and migrants in their workforce and beyond. Thanks to this momentum, social and economic partners from several Member States are working together to implement the objectives of this initiative.

The European Commission and EU social and economic partners also signed a [European partnership for integration](#) in December 2017 to support and strengthen opportunities for refugees and migrants legally residing in the EU to integrate the European labour market.

The European Integration Network (EIN) was also created in 2016 to facilitate policy coordination and cooperation for the integration of third country nationals in the EU. It is composed of European Union Member State representatives, coming from the ministries/administrations responsible for integration. In this framework, field visits have already been organised in Sweden and Germany. More than 12 Member States participated in field visits organised under this scheme, allowing exchanges of fruitful information, experiences and practices.

It is clear for the European Commission that integration does happen first and foremost at the local level, in cities, schools and workplaces, making the role of regional and local authorities crucial in the integration process. In this sense, the partnership for the inclusion of migrants and refugees which is part of the urban agenda, helps cities to deal much more efficiently with challenges concerning integration and inclusion of migrants and refugees. The first urban Academy (one of the actions of this partnership) was also held mid-April, acting as a European strategic learning environment for practitioners and policy-makers working on integration on the local, regional and national level.

Concerning funding, she stressed that the new architecture of the MFF will respond to the concerns of European citizens, taking into account that migration and integration are among the top priorities, above economic matters. Integration will be included in multiple areas of funding.

She also stressed the need to find long term solutions by looking at the external dimension of migration. She mentioned that the European Commission developed partnerships in 2016 with 3rd countries (countries of origin but also countries of transit) in order to set up actions to foster integration in third countries and support successful voluntary returns.

She concluded by saying that the work done on migration issues can be stepped up in the future by collaborating with Member States and with local and regional authorities, both at European and national level. She hoped that the negotiation on the new MFF would be over before the end of the current European Commission's mandate. However, it might happen that migration issues have to be dealt with using money left on the table if negotiations take longer than expected.

❖ **Models, experiences and visions:**

➤ *The Skåne multilevel governance system for reception and integration of migrants:*

- **Annika Annerby Jansson**, Vice-President of the CPMR, in charge of migration, Vice President of Region Skåne, Sweden

She chairs the CPMR Migration Task Force and for the purposes of the conference represented Region Skåne (Sweden) in her capacity as Vice-President.

She started by giving some background facts: Sweden is well known for having a very generous policy concerning refugees and asylum seekers. The country has received many asylum seekers, more than most EU countries, considering the rather small size of the country.

The region of Skåne is located in the southern part of Sweden, linked to Denmark by a bridge between Malmö and Copenhagen. Due to its geographical location, the region of Skåne is the arrival point for most refugees in Sweden. The region started a common project to improve the reception and integration process in 2008 with the Swedish state and the association of local authorities. This project called "Partnership Skåne" is a true example of multilevel governance. This project put a system in place for receiving and integrating refugees before the 2015 crisis, when Sweden received roughly 165 000 refugees, many of them within a couple of months during the autumn. 90% of them came through the region of Skåne. This system, which was already in place, enabled them to handle the situation.

- **Katarina Carlzén**, Head Coordinator for Partnership Skåne, Sweden

[\(Link to the Powerpoint presentation\)](#)

She started her presentation by mentioning that there is no definition of the word integration. Sweden is still reflecting on the word: who should decide when a person is integrated or not? Migration and integration

issues are deeply linked to global injustices. Refugees and migrants are bearing frustrations and negative experiences which will affect their capacity and willingness to be integrated.

The Platform “Partnership Skåne” is based on health and social inclusion. The platform relies on a multilevel governance approach, involving various actors at local, regional and national level. This platform is about producing strategies and at the same time converting them into practices. The platform follows a very practical approach, underpinned by scientific evidence.

The work done during the last 10 years by the platform is now heavily embodied. It is part of the regional strategy “Open Skåne 2030”, the regional agreement for the integration of migrants as well as the regional Agreement for Collaboration with the social economy. It also influences national capacity development, using health and social inclusion as main factors.

The platform is organised in regional hubs. The funding mainly comes from the Skåne county administrative board and is complemented by various EU funds as well as assignments of the national Ministry of Health.

It is an extremely complex organisation but it follows a very basic and simple model which is based on the results of a survey conducted 10 years ago with questions such as: “why don’t people learn Swedish despite language training?” “Why do people feel frustrated and hostile?” “Why do refugees over- or under-use the Swedish healthcare system?” A smart and effective system was designed in accordance to the answers to these questions and in order to address the needs and perspectives of refugees in Sweden. The main objective was to build a system which correlates with the needs and the perspectives of the people it is designed for. The idea was to create a holistic and inclusive system, based on knowledge, involving the authorities at different levels but also the social economy and the scientific community. Three main areas of activities were set up: (1) Civic and health communication for all migrants coming to the region (5 000 per year) – (2) Possibilities for qualitative individually designed activities within the social economy and NGOs – (3) Producing knowledge through the scientific community and transferring it into direct actions. All activities correlate with the national labour market policy. These activities also provide possibilities for trust, confidence and networks which are key factors in Sweden to enter the labour market.

Because of the effects forced migration has on both the mental and physical health and well-being of migrants, health is a key factor which needs be considered when looking at integration. Researches have proved that after entering and starting the integration process, it takes around 7 to 10 years in general for a forced migrant to enter the labour market in Sweden.

Indeed, the development of poor physical and psychological health deteriorates over time, after the person enters into the society. Therefore, the activities developed by Partnership Skåne respond also to those risks linked to the migration process and the establishment process. There are 20 different projects, all coordinated and synchronised toward achieving a holistic integration process. Partnership Skåne also involves cultural institutions, museums, libraries, NGOs.

In conclusion, she said that to have a functional system, it needs to be related to human rights and the right to health and social participation. It has to be based on research, knowledge and collaboration to produce strategies which need at the same time to be conveyed at practical level.

➤ *Challenges, needs and possible solutions in the Greek regions:*

- **Christiana Kalogirou**, President of North Aegean Region

She started by saying that migration is an extreme and unprecedented challenge.

200 000 inhabitants live in the region of North Aegean, which is composed of 3 main Islands: Lesbos, Samos and Chios.

Migration flows in the North Aegean can be divided into two major periods: from April 2015 until March 2016, before the European agreement between the EU and Turkey, and from the signature of the agreement until today.

There are currently 13 300 migrants living in the North Aegean: 8 000 in Lesbos, 1 600 in Samos and approximately 3 000 in Chios. To give an idea of the tasks ahead regarding migration, she mentioned that the number of migrants arriving in the North Aegean islands is on the increase: 2 062 migrants and refugees on the islands in April 2018. For the same period they were 500 in 2017. The small community living in these islands is receiving migrants and refugees with dignity, complying with the principle of humanism, despite the fact that they do not have the capacities to do so. She did not hide the fact that there is also a certain degree of fatigue in facing the issue after all these years.

To face migration flows, she listed a various number of needs. The asylum services should be strengthened, by allocating more human resources. A system should also be put in place to divert these flows towards other places. The North Aegean islands have a limited surface, which conditions their hosting capacity (small local communities, limited infrastructures and equipment). She also mentioned the need for financial resources and clear-cut administrative procedures to access these resources in order to act quickly. She mentioned that the community in the North Aegean is having trouble understanding complex procedures linked to EU programmes, which were not designed to respond to urgent situations related to migration.

She also said that the agreement between the EU and Turkey worked for the North Aegean region because it helped to alleviate the burden on its communities which feel sometime helpless about the situation and the scope of the phenomenon.

She concluded by saying that only a European approach will allow us to solve the migration issue. Migration should be a priority at European level and national level in order to gauge the scope of the phenomenon which is continuously evolving. It will be the only way to consider tangible actions.

➤ *The [White Paper](#) on the reception of migrants in Tuscany*

- **Vittorio Bugli**, Regional Minister for migration, Tuscany Region

Like in most parts of Europe, Italian regions do not have proper competencies in the field of migration. Regions follow general principles linked to the reception of refugees and asylum seekers.

The region has defined an enlarged reception model, following its own criteria in order to guarantee a proper integration pathway. The model is based on the presence of small structures across Tuscany, in order to avoid concentration and guarantee a proper integration pathway for the 12 000 asylum seekers staying in Tuscany. He stressed that the region did not have to face major problems concerning migration issues as they managed to handle the situation in a proper way.

There are national legislation and regulations concerning migration in Italy. However, as the situation is managed at the regional level, the region of Tuscany decided one year ago to define regional measures and guidelines to improve the reception system and to transform it into a real integration system. The idea was to guarantee social cohesion and also growth in its territory. The region has witnessed a shift from emergency situations to permanent ones in the 800 reception centres spread across Tuscany, as asylum seekers often wait a long time before getting an answer.

Tuscany developed partnerships with other bodies and entities, working on key themes with municipalities, NGOs and volunteer organisations during participatory meetings and seminars. This work resulted in a White Paper on immigration policies for asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international or humanitarian protection. Thanks to this work, the region has been able to manage migration flows quite well since 2016, by following a model based on the management of small reception structures for a period of 3 years. Individuals are the first beneficiaries of the reception policy. This policy aims to guarantee fundamental rights

and give access to public services to these individuals. Together with municipalities, regions play a key role in the management of public services, especially when it comes to the management of social services. In the future the region would also like to turn private reception centres into public ones to guarantee greater integration.

The White Paper sets out several recommendations such as setting up an intra-institutional research centre to support active policies. 100 million euros are dedicated to migration issues in Tuscany. New jobs will be created and people will be trained to provide efficient services. Minister Bugli also mentioned that the next step is to improve the system in place to deal with the linguistic dimension of integration. The region is currently working with permanent education centres. Right after the summer break, the region will take stock of the situation to evaluate the remaining gaps in order to provide accurate services at regional level, in collaboration with local partners.

To conclude, he underlined that the efforts which have been made at regional level should be put into a wider perspective, within the EU framework. As decisions on migration issues must be taken quickly at all levels of governance, he recalled the importance of the commitment of all EU Members States and the need to review the allocation of EU funds, so they can be wisely used. All these elements go hand and hand. He stressed that a better system can be achieved via financial support as well as by transferring skills and competences at all levels to guarantee cohesion and inclusion.

➤ *The Catalan system for reception and integration*

- **Oriol Amorós**, Secretary for Equality Migration and Citizenship, Catalonia

[\(Link to the Powerpoint presentation\)](#)

He gave some background facts. Catalonia has been a reception area for decades. The region witnessed a strong flow of migration well spread and scattered across the territory between 1997 and 2007. The number of migrants increased from 6.3 million to 7.5 million (increase of 23%). During the same period, the region has enjoyed an important economic growth. Migrants worked in various economic sectors (services industry, agriculture, and manufacturing) across the territory.

The current migration waves are more international than the previous ones. Today there are 101 nationalities represented in Catalonia, covering almost all UN countries. 300 different languages are spoken, and all religions are represented. One out of 3 children born in Catalonia today has a foreign mother or father. The same observation can be made for marriages. Mr Amorós stressed therefore that it is crucial to consider migration as a structural phenomenon.

The Catalan model for reception and integration is based on full citizenship. Migrants are considered straight from the beginning as future citizens. Indeed, it is often said that migrants will stay a few years in the host country and then go back to their homeland. However, this is no longer a reality and people tend to stay for an indefinite period of time and become citizens of the country in which they are living. Therefore, migrants in Catalonia have a very early access to rights. There are three levels of access to rights and every level implies access to public services, regardless of status.

1st level - Rights of foreign people with regular or irregular status: basic social services, compulsory education, healthcare, effective protection of the judges and courts, free legal assistance...

2nd level – Rights of foreigners with resident permits: public housing assistance, post-compulsory education, employment and social security, family reunification, right to vote and stand as a candidate in municipal elections under certain circumstances...

3rd level – Obtaining Spanish nationality and full assimilation of rights.

Migration issues are integrated into mainstream policies in order to have a global approach, looking at the social and the economic level. Four different bodies are working on integration policies:

- bilateral committee with representative of the state
- bilateral committee with municipalities
- Committee gathering Catalonian government ministries
- One multilateral committee working with NGOs and municipalities.

He stressed the importance of encouraging political and social consensus, admitting that it is not an easy task. The migration policy in Catalonia is based on a national consensus agreement between the government and the opposition parties from 2008. This consensus has always been at the very basis of the work carried out at the regional level.

Another important element is the management of diversity: How to balance diversity and shared values in order to develop a common public culture? Catalonia is leaning towards an intercultural model: pursuing inclusion, recognising diversity, and fostering interaction.

Concerning reception and integration, actions are taken at the local level, with municipalities. The region is in charge of the coordination between the municipalities. Municipalities are the entrance door for migrants and asylum seekers who register within municipalities where they will receive information about first reception procedures. They can then follow languages courses free of charge. Trainings and information sessions (voluntary based) on the way of life and the legal framework in Catalonia are also provided. There are also courses for illiterate people. All these activities are managed by local administrations. In some municipalities, 30% of migrants and asylum seekers will use these services, in others it varies between 15 to 20%.

The budget dedicated to integration in 2017 was €5 800 000. There are 170 other specific programmes as well as different initiatives dedicated to integration.

*Respondent: **Anna Piccinni**, Policy Analyst – Territorial approaches to Migrants and Vulnerable Migrant Groups, OECD*

The OECD had produced a report called "[Working together for local integration of migrants and refugees](#)" to answer the question: "what does it take to adopt a place-based policy for integration?" by looking at what is being done on the matter in 72 EU cities and 9 large EU cities.

The term 'place-based policy' reflect the idea of including all different levels of governance in a coherent way of working together. The first concern raised by the cities was a lack of multilevel coordination and information sharing. Multilevel coordination is crucial as migrants' integration goes beyond competences. She also stressed the need for policy tools in terms of objectives and common standards, which can be shared, especially in terms of indicators.

She then summarised some of the good practices from the previous presentations:

Region Skåne: Partnership Skåne shows the importance of working at different levels of governance (county/association of municipalities/national framework) to boost effectiveness.

Catalonia region: the first reception services put in place by the region and local authorities are ways of completing what cannot be done by national authorities which are too far away from the reality of the territory. This system shows that the region clearly supports the integration of migrants and refugees even if the competences are in the hands of the Member State.

Tuscany region: The region has decided on its own standards concerning the reception and integration of migrants, via a dialogue between representatives of the national and local levels. By doing so, there is an efficient transfer of responsibilities.

In most countries, the reception mechanisms lie at national level and are then transferred to the local authorities to foster integration and social cohesion. This is where EU funds can help. Indeed, mainstreaming funding as well as the management of reception and integration at local level is crucial.

To answer the multi-dimensional aspects of integration, it is important to coordinate the various policies at local level and develop integrated policies connecting together the health, education, housing and employment sectors. Regions and local authorities try to establish contact across departments to make sure all the departments implement services which are effective for migrants. It is a matter of building bridges: creating parallel services to respond to specific needs of migrants is not an answer as it is incompatible with social cohesion policies.

Communication is also an important tool for integration to explain what place there is for newcomers within the community. Communication is one way to turn migration into a stable factor within our economy facing demographic changes.

Providing migrants and refugees with networking opportunities and bridging them with the business community is also a way to allow them to build a social capital, which is an important factor in the integration process.

Working together with civil society organisations is also crucial, as they have the necessary expertise. There is a need to keep track of the actions of civil society in order to avoid fragmentation and make sure that these actions are in line with the broader vision formulated and implemented by the local level.

SESSION 3: THE EXTERNAL DIMENSION OF MIGRATION

- **Anna Terrón**, President Instrategies (Chair and Moderator)

She introduced the session and gave the floor to the speakers in order to address the external dimension of migration.

❖ Experiences and visions:

- **Guillermo Martínez Suárez**, Regional Minister of the Presidency responsible for Citizen Participation, Principality of Asturias, Member of the Committee of the Regions

Concerning asylum and migration policy, a piece of legislation for regional development was approved in 2006, giving guidelines regarding the actions taken at regional level. The regions asked the Spanish Government to draft a protocol for all the regions in Spain concerning reception and integration, a request which remained unanswered. Therefore, even though they do not have the competences, some regions decided to develop their own protocol or conventions. Asturias was the second region which introduced in 2016 a coordination protocol for the reception and integration of refugees after the war in Syria. The region mainly focuses on prevention. Nevertheless, the region is supporting the Zaatari refugee camp, the world's second biggest refugee camp. With the UN's help, the region is involved in managing the camp and has dedicated a budget of €750 000 for a two years period to face emergency situations.

The region also conducts various project to raise citizens' awareness. The region produces documentaries which explain for example the life of young refugees through testimonies. These documentaries are useful tools to talk about the consequence of migration flows and draw attention to dramatic situations experienced by migrants and refugees.

Thanks to a cooperation of 4 departments of the government and with the support of NGOs, the region was also able to implement a programme for the reception of refugees supported by the different political parties. He stressed the fact that decisions can only be taken by the national level. Regions and local authorities can provide financial resources, offer accommodation but cannot take decisions without the support of the State. However, regions have a broad power (in terms of health or education for example) regarding the implementation of actions to facilitate the integration of refugees.

He concluded by saying that a more efficient system needs to be put in place to provide answers. A lack of actions regarding this issue has a negative impact on the EU project as such.

- **Filippo Spanu**, Regional Minister and delegate of the President for migration, Sardinia Region

Sardinia, because of its location, receives migrants from several countries. Most of them are irregular and the region has to address migration flows controlled by illegal organisations.

He presented the multi-governance approach followed by Sardinia to address the external dimension of migration. Sardinia has the authority to implement neighbourhood policy. There is a need to control migration flows by being able to provide future prospects for inhabitants in neighbour countries. Actions can be taken with countries of the African Coast.

Sardinia has the willingness to strengthen its actions in the framework of EU neighbourhood policy. However, the island is facing issues, as for example, Algeria does not recognise the neighbourhood programme which make it difficult to build bridges.

He believed that neighbourhood activities are very positive, especially to foster a multi-level approach.

The Conference of Italian Regions has tried to define joint political actions, through policy planning between all Italian regions towards southern Mediterranean countries. This first policy document was shared between all Italian regions and used when liaising with Tunisia. This strategy has become the basis of further external actions.

Cooperation projects are paramount, as regions need to work with countries of origin of migration flows such as the southern Mediterranean and sub Saharan countries. The region of Sardinia took many initiatives together with the Italian government to coordinate cooperation actions with these countries. The region is working hand in hand, developing cooperation projects with municipalities in a coordinated way, especially while working with specific groups of migrants and also by following the experiences of various civil society organisations.

The region has developed a vision as well as long term objectives. Little by little, results are noticeable.

- **Miriam Pérez Albaladejo**, Director General for Family and Social Policies, Region of Murcia on **Mediterranean City to City Migration**

The region of Murcia is located in the South East of Spain and has 1.5 million inhabitants.

Since the 90's, Murcia has received migrants, first from the Maghreb region and sub Saharan countries and ten years later from Latina America, Eastern Europe and Asia. The region has introduced several projects for integration as well as a specific programme dedicated to youth, which is key when it comes to integration. The region also followed EU guidelines on the issue. Together with the UN, the region organised in June 2015 a seminar on migration in the framework of decentralised cooperation. Murcia also works in the field sustainable development in line with the UN 2020 agenda.

In January 2018, 637 people benefitted from the first reception system which is based on a multi-governance approach. The region wanted the Spanish Government to provide more information on individuals in need

of protection. Over the past few years, the region has noticed an increase in the number of illegal migrants. Last year, 2 000 migrants came to Spain and the same number is expected this year. Many migrants are unaccompanied children. The region also provides support to children staying in refugee camps. In order to cope with this situation a protocol was designed for reception, working with the national and the local level.

Today the region is working on instruments and tools to address the external dimension of migration. The region has a strategy concerning migrants and asylum seekers, which includes cooperation with various countries. In the future, Murcia would like to increase its cooperation activities regarding migration, hand in hand with the CPMR, the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission and the Committee of the Regions.

The region is taking part in a cooperation initiative in Libya in order to provide trainings on water treatment. A first technical visit lasting four weeks took place in 2017. Twenty technicians and politician went to Libya to provide training on water treatment for irrigation purposes.

The region of Murcia is also supporting CPMR initiatives to foster mutual assistance between the regions of the Mediterranean Sea as well as the role of these regions in neighbourhood policy.

Regions should really play a role in the decision-making process and have a direct access to EU funds.

There is a need for a strong commitment of the European Union as well as a migration strategy involving all players at the various levels of power. Management should be decentralised if we want to implement the EU migration agenda efficiently.

Respondent: **Ralph Genetzke**, Head of the Brussels Mission of the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)

The ICMPD is an intergovernmental organisation representing Member States and specialised in migration issues. The organisation has been implementing a project funded by the European Union called “the Mediterranean cities to cities migration project” for the past 3 years.

The project gathers a network of 9 cities of similar size (1 million inhabitants). The objective was to foster synergies between cities, not only regarding integration policy but also urban management. The City network UCLG as well as UN Habitat are also partners of the project. The first phase of the project ended in 2018 and a second phase will be launched with a broader network of cities thanks to additional funding.

The project is structured around 3 main elements:

- Dialogue within the cities and among the cities in order to build bridges and exchange knowledge on challenges faced in each city;
- Knowledge through the development of City Migration Profiles that set out data and information on the local migration context in partner cities as well as future priorities to address;
- Action through transfer of migration governance and city planning strategies, establishment of city expert networks and development of pilot projects implemented in the participating Southern Mediterranean cities.

The second phase of the project is in the process of being launched. There will be an extension of the number of cities involved, including more cities in Morocco and new countries at the city level: Algeria, Libya and Egypt.

The ICMPD has demonstrate through its work that a multi-level governance approach is necessary. To make it work, coordination and funding at the regional and local level are crucial. It is often quite easy to find a common understanding. However, to invest in it, coordination is the key: identify who does what, at the right moment.

Until 2012, regional and local authorities were not mentioned within EU documents on migration and development. Further support is still needed, and opportunities in the external dimension of migration have to be developed. It is not an easy task in a context which is not really in favour of decentralisation. However, multi-level governance on the issue can be achieved by building trust step by step.

KEYNOTE SPEECHES: THE GLOBAL COMPACT FOR MIGRATION AND HUMANITARIAN CORRIDORS

- **Eugenio Ambrosi**, Regional Director of IOM's Regional Office for the EU, Norway and Switzerland

He stated that the international community has identified quite clearly:

The drivers and causes of migration:

- The demographic evolution in various regions of the World: the demographic curve is decreasing in some parts of the world such as in Europe and increasing in other regions.
- Inequality in the distribution of wealth between different societies, countries, Regions.
- The level of social economic development in different regions
- Climate change and environmental degradations that cause people to move.

The strategic line of actions which should be pursued in order to improve governance of migration:

- Addressing some of the roots causes, especially when it comes to poverty and inequality by providing bigger investments in development especially in certain regions
- Focus on integration of migrants when they arrived within communities.

The Gaps and challenges which need to be addressed:

- The need for a more precise data and information on international migration.
- Fight xenophobia and racism and foster social cohesion and diversity management.
- The need to provide protection of fundamental rights to all categories of migrants (regular or irregular, documented or undocumented)
- Fight the criminal aspect of migration such as trafficking.

All these elements have been part of the latest reflection which has been carried out by the United Nation in New-York in order to prepare and approve a Global Compact on migration at the end of this year. However, the international community had already identified these elements years ago during the International Conference on Population and Demography held in Cairo, Egypt.

On the one hand, it indicates an important vision of the community leadership 24 year ago and their ability to conduct a correct analysis of the phenomenon. But at the same time, it shows that not much or not enough has been done to tackle migration management. 24 years later, the situation has not changed, and we are still facing the same issues, pointing at the same drivers and strategic actions and still afraid of the same challenges.

This is one of the main reasons why the Global Compact on migration - which will hopefully be approved during the International conference in Morocco at the end of the year - is a key strategic moment to finally put together a set of commitments to improve the governance of migration at international, national and local levels.

It is an historic and positive opportunity, provided that past mistakes are avoided. He mentioned a few of them:

- Avoid catastrophic statements when it comes to migration and migratory movement, which generate negative reactions in public opinion. It is important to stick to the facts and base statements on evidences. Migration flows are not an invasion and it is not unmanageable for Europe.
- Ensure the widest participation of stakeholders that have to deal with migration and improve the governance of migration (cross-sectoral policy). Stakeholders are authorities at all levels but also civil society (grass roots organisations) and migrants themselves, who are often forgotten.
- Improve how to implement partnerships with countries and regions of origin of migrants, especially in Europe. Partnership means equal level discussions, taking into account the interests and priorities of both sides and sharing responsibilities. Leading by example is important.

He then listed a few aspects to ensure the success of the Global Compact:

- Consider State Sovereignty as a value to ensure the enjoyment of fundamental rights to protect people in general.
- Ensure that the needs, priorities and vision of the local communities are actually absorbed at the national level and brought forward at the International level. Local involvement is paramount as local authorities are in the front line, by integrating migrants.
- Local authorities and communities need to make sure that what is being discussed during the negotiations on the Global Compact by their central governments correspond to their vision and needs and fit with local realities.

He focused his conclusion on the hope that the Global Compact on migration will respect the few principles he outlined previously but also that in 24 years, when discussing international migration, that this Global Compact will not be quoted as another example of a nice document that failed to bring many results to the life of people across the world.

- **Prof. Jan De Volder, Sant' Egidio Community**

He gave a short overview of the project: Humanitarian corridors started in December 2015 in Italy when an agreement was signed between the Foreign Ministry, the Interior Ministry and the Community of Sant' Egidio together with the protestant churches in Italy. It is a highly innovative initiative because it is promoted by the civil society in partnership with the authorities.

Migration is not a new phenomenon. However, there is a sense of emergency around the Mediterranean Sea which requires looking at policies in place, greater solidarity as well as the participation of the civil society at different levels.

The humanitarian corridors project is based on 2 main aspects:

- Creating safe and legal pathways to Europe, avoiding death at sea and human trafficking. All the access roads to Europe are mainly closed. All entries come by the back door.
- Integration process which is innovative thanks to the civil society involvement.

The goal was to find a legal way for refugees to enter Europe. The legal way of entry would overcome European fears without changing the current legislation on asylum. Sant' Egidio asked the Italian Government to support the project but the Community offered to pay the expenses (including travel expenses of the people as well as the reception in Italy for 2 years) using funds from ecclesiastic taxes that Italian protestant churches benefits from.

The first humanitarian corridor allowed to bring a thousand people coming from Lebanon with humanitarian visas. In November 2017, the programme was extended for another thousand humanitarian visas. A few months ago, a second agreement was signed between the Italian government and Sant' Egidio to open a new humanitarian corridor from Ethiopia to Italy, in cooperation with the Italian episcopal conference and the

Italian Branch of Caritas. Thanks to this agreement 500 people mainly from Eritrea, Sudan and Somalia were able to travel safely to Italy. The criteria is vulnerability. This system is a way to inform the welcoming society beforehand as well.

It is a bottom-up initiative as people arriving in Europe through human corridors are guests of families, parishes, local associations, or citizens who offer their resources and facilities. The model is “adoptive”. The result is a quick integration. Children are quite immediately enrolled in state schools where they learn Italian, and people are integrated within a broader network which will allow them to find a job and become independent.

The Humanitarian Corridors have allowed the Sant’ Egidio community to test an innovative reception system as it exploits and mobilises the civil society resources with help of the states, local governments and regions. The main welcome structure is the local civil society. Sant’ Egidio is convinced that communities have greater integration capacity than anonymous infrastructures.

He also stressed that with a concrete proposal, the civil society is easy to mobilise. Migrants arriving via the humanitarian corridors are distributed in 70 different cities and municipalities across Italy. Sant’ Egidio and other organisations monitor the process.

He underlined that Humanitarian Corridors is a pilot project which can be replicated in EU and non-EU countries. A similar agreement was signed with the French government last year, under President Holland, and also with the centre right Belgium government. Sant’ Egidio is currently holding discussions with other European countries to extend the project

Today the Human Corridors pilot project is established as a best practice. It was also stated by the European Commission and the European Parliament that private sponsorship enhances the good integration of refugees without alarming public opinion. It is therefore in the interest of the states to sustain and promote this form of efficient solidarity. Building legal pathways supported by private sponsorship such as individuals, families and civil society organisations is one of the solutions for a safer and legal migration.

He concluded saying that migration it is a feature of the global world and it will remain this way. The question is not why but rather how we will manage it and how to establish a good governance of migration.