

12th GFMD Summit Meeting

“Sustainable approaches to human mobility: Upholding rights, strengthening state agency, and advancing development through partnerships and collective action” - 20-24 January 2020 - Call for Voluntary Sharing of Initiatives, Experiences and Lessons Learned

Portugal is committed, both internally and externally, to the search for solidarity and humanistic solutions to the migration crisis, which contribute to reducing the suffering of migrants and guaranteeing their rights. For this reason, Portugal has been defending the importance of strengthening multilateral cooperation and dialogue between States in the pursuit of effective solutions to migration challenges, with a particular concern regarding the protection of human rights of migrants and vulnerable people - particularly women, children and unaccompanied minors –, the need to develop positive strategies for their full integration into host societies, the fight against migrant trafficking networks and the approach on the root causes of irregular immigration.

Beyond short-term solutions, Portugal strongly favors a preventive developmental approach that (a) tackles the root causes of irregular migration, supporting the populations in the countries of origin with a view to creating the conditions conducive to inclusive and sustainable development, and (b) acknowledges the benefits of regular migration for countries of origin, transit and destination. Recognizing that development cooperation is instrumental in this context, we consistently support the nexus between migration and development. Bearing in mind that migration is an unavoidable concern of our times and one of the most important challenges worldwide, and encouraged by the adoption of the Global Compact on Migration, Portugal was one of the first countries in the world to design and approve a National Plan to implement the GCM.

The National Implementation Plan, approved by Council of Ministers Resolution 141/2019 of 20 August, resulted from a cross-cutting policy alignment exercise in which most Ministries were involved and follows the 23 objective framework of the GCM to cover all relevant dimensions of the migration phenomenon. It was conceived as an operational document - consisting of 97 implementation measures, identifying the respective implementation deadlines and the governmental areas involved.

It is structured around five fundamental axes:

(i) Promotion of safe, orderly and regular migration as the most effective way of framing human mobility movements, managing demographic dynamics and valuing their contribution to the development of countries of origin, transit and destination. Among the measures foreseen under this axes the approval and implementation of a new mobility Scheme for CPLP, the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (Angola, Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Timor Leste and Brazil).

(ii) Improvement of migration flow organization and integrated border management processes, by combating trafficking of human beings, curbing irregular migration and promoting document security. One of the measures contained in the Plan in this framework is

the creation of the Single Immigrant Desk, allowing access to potential immigrants to the different services they need to contact, through a single point of entry.

(iii) Promoting the welcoming and integration of immigrants, family reunification, the mastery of the Portuguese language, the education of children and young people and the education and vocational training of adults, improving the conditions of access to housing, health and social protection, and encouraging their integration and civic participation.

(iv) Supporting the connection of migrants to their country of origin and their return projects, through measures such as the facilitation of 'remittance' transfer processes.

(v) Increasing development partnerships with countries of origin and transit thus addressing the root causes of migration and reducing the burden of factors linked to material deprivation, inequality and discrimination, lack of job opportunities or lack of minimum welfare. Portuguese development cooperation, both bilaterally, as well as at the multilateral level will have an important role to play in this framework.

To promote the periodic and inclusive evaluation of the implementation process of this Plan, an inter-ministerial coordination committee was established, that includes, among others, the members of Government responsible for foreign affairs, internal administration and labor, solidarity and social security. This inter-ministerial committee meets on a quarterly basis and is supported by a network of focal points.

The Portuguese Government has set up several working groups to operationalize all objectives and measures foreseen in the national plan.