



EUROPEAN MIGRATION FORUM

Safe Routes, Safe Futures:

How to manage the mixed flows of migrants across the Mediterranean?

26/27 January 2015

SYNTHESIS REPORT CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

STRUCTURE

CONCLUSIONS

1.	Introduction to the First European Migration Forum.....	1
2.	The Context in the Mediterranean: A Practitioners' Perspective	2
3.	What European Policy Agenda on Migration? Issues and Challenges.....	3
4.	Cross-cutting Recommendations from the Workshops	4
5.	The Role and Contributions of Civil Society Organisations	5

ANNEX 1: POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1.	WORKSHOP A: Access to Asylum Procedure at the Borders	8
2.	WORKSHOP B: Integration of Beneficiaries of International Protection.....	12
3.	WORKSHOP C: A Comprehensive Approach to Counter Migrant Smuggling.....	14
4.	WORKSHOP D: Providing Adequate Information in Countries of Origin and Transit	16

CONCLUSIONS

Sergio Carrera and Thomas Huddleston¹

1. Introduction to the First European Migration Forum

The first meeting of the [European Migration Forum](#) (EMF) took place on the 26/27 January 2015 in Brussels. The EMF addressed **issues and challenges in the management of mixed flows of migrants and asylum seekers across the Mediterranean**. The discussions were structured around four thematic Workshops: First, access to the asylum procedure at the borders; Second, integration of beneficiaries of international protection; Third, a comprehensive approach to countering migrant smuggling; and Fourth, providing adequate information in countries of origin and transit. A [Background Paper](#) outlining the framing of the Workshops and the questions for discussion was drafted by the Commission.

In his opening speech Luis Miguel Pariza Castaños (European Economic and Social Committee) highlighted that the new civil society Forum, which now covers issues related to immigration, integration, asylum and borders, will play a more proactive role on issues of direct relevance to ongoing EU policy making processes.

Migration and asylum, especially the situation in the Mediterranean, can be found at the top of the new European Commission's agenda. The first EMF therefore arrived at a timely moment when the Commission is exploring **the priorities for its future EU migration policy agenda**. As Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship, Dimitris Avramopoulos highlighted in his [speech](#) at the Forum, cooperation with civil society will be central to the development of a comprehensive European Agenda on Migration.

The first EMF's policy recommendations were agreed and presented by the four participants who had the role of rapporteurs in each of the Workshops. They are enclosed in **Annex 1 of this Report**. This document provides a synthesis of the main issues and **cross-cutting challenges and recommendations** that were discussed during plenary sessions and workshops.

¹ Dr. Sergio Carrera is Senior Research Fellow and Head of Justice and Home Affairs Section at the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS); Mr. Thomas Huddleston is Programme Director on Migration and Integration at the Migration Policy Group (MPG).

2. The Context in the Mediterranean: A Practitioners' Perspective

The drivers and consequences of mixed migration flows in the Mediterranean were identified by participating practitioners working with migrants and refugees who came from or through these countries. Their experience from the ground is a unique added value of civil society consultation, since the deaths in the Mediterranean are regularly discussed in press and policy circles from a safe distance.

Putting the Mediterranean mixed migration flows into perspective, participants reiterated that the world is experiencing the worst refugee crisis since the Second World War. Most of these refugees are languishing in refugee camps in developing countries, with certain groups now stranded in neighbouring or transit countries that themselves have become conflict zones. However, **the EU is not experiencing anything like a refugee or migration crisis** when the EU's high level of development and low number of new arrivals is compared to the situations on the other side of the Mediterranean. The situation in the Mediterranean is unlikely to change any time soon, given the persistent long-term root causes of war, human rights violations and economic devastation in the Middle East, North Africa and the Horn of Africa.

The challenges for EU Member States to respond were not new or unknown. The sea arrivals and drowning of migrants and refugees in the Mediterranean date back to the 1990s. Member States and maritime vessels' longstanding obligations to conduct Search and Rescue have proven insufficient to avoid the now regular tragedies at sea. In the words of one speaker echoing many participants, Europe's real 'crisis' is not a refugee or migratory crisis, but **an internal political crisis condemning the EU and its Member States for not having a common policy based on solidarity to take their fair share** in this world refugee crisis just across its land and sea borders.

Participants insisted that the EU's response cannot be limited to protection issues as its Member States are facing an impending demographic 'crisis'. The calls are increasing from all corners for greater labour migration and inclusion to maintain the EU shrinking labour forces and provide for the growing elderly populations. As this reality sets in, the EU and its Member States will have to prioritise the labour market integration of refugees and migrants already residing in Member States and develop more legal labour migration channels to avoid irregular work and exploitation.

Policymakers and the public would better understand the situation if they could hear the [testimonies](#) of Majid Hussain, Milen Eyob, Christian Remøy and other migrants and first responders who participated in the Introductory Session of the Forum. For instance, Majid Hussain's testimony on his experience in crossing the Mediterranean highlighted how "*no one was there to help*" people at distress at sea and provided specific details of existing gaps and deficits in treatment and reception capacities upon arrival in European soil. He said: "*I could not find democracy and equality*" when arriving to Europe. These testimonies called European actors to have **a comprehensive and evidence-based discussion** on the actual effects of policies on people's lives before adopting new rules or implementing new ideas.

3. What European Policy Agenda on Migration? Issues and Challenges

A key cross-cutting issue is whether or not policymakers and stakeholders have a **common starting point** for the future EU policy on migration, asylum, integration and borders. The current EU migration policies have developed dynamically during the last 15 years. These frameworks however constitute a very complex and fragmented set of rules and standards. Important gaps in law and policy still exist, especially for legal channels for immigration and protection to the EU.

Practitioners often observe in areas of current EU law and policy a **major and growing gap between what the law and the policy say and what actually happens on the ground**. Existing EU rules and fundamental rights are not always respected in practice and cannot be taken for granted. There are deficits in the daily monitoring, scrutiny and accountability of daily practices by national border authorities.

A lack of proportionality and respect for fundamental rights is another major concern in the development of future migration and border management practices, as is clear in current debates about search and rescue at sea (SAR), push-back practices, the criminalisation of undocumented migrants and practical barriers to effective access to international protection in the EU.

NGOs and local authorities saw the common starting point for future EU policy as **better compliance with the democratic rule of law and fundamental rights**. This enforcement of EU law and principles should then be accompanied by a comprehensive approach to fill all the major gaps in EU migration and asylum

policy, especially legal channels to the EU. The goal of these new measures should be to **develop clear lines of responsibility and greater solidarity among the Member States.**

4. Cross-cutting Recommendations from the Workshops

The following recommendations can be highlighted as presenting more of a **general or cross-thematic relevance:**

1. **Stocktaking exercise:** The EMF participants highlighted the need to take stock of what we already have over the table in respect of EU laws and policies in these fields. A **compendium** of the already existing EU legal instruments and the rights/standards enshrined in these should be compiled before proposing new legislations. **This should be accompanied by an implementation plan** aiming at providing practitioners and authorities with an overview of what rights do migrants and asylum seekers have and ways to address current gaps.
2. **Accountability and Independent Monitoring:** Access to justice was also identified as a key priority, in particular in cases of fundamental rights violations and non-compliance with EU law. Priority should be given to: First, better ensuring day-to-day accountability and scrutiny, of both practices and funding falling within the scope of EU policy and funding schemes; and second, guaranteeing that EU Member States, relevant national authorities and vessels fulfil their respective obligations in ensuring safe access. European institutions should increase their **commitment in enforcing Member States' daily implementation** of EU asylum, border and migration legislations. Civil society organisations should be duly consulted and involved in these processes.

It is necessary to establish an **independent monitoring or scrutiny mechanism** of border controls, surveillance, SAR, visa and asylum policies. [FRONTEX Triton Operation](#), which has recently been extended until at least the end of 2015, should be subject to closer evaluation, in particular the implementation of its Operational Plan and the compliance of its border control/surveillance and SAR activities with EU law and fundamental rights. Participants alluded to the need to discuss an EU-wide SAR operation in the Mediterranean. Any future SAR operation involving military actors should go hand-to-hand with clear EU rule of law and tighter scrutiny mechanisms. The establishment of a **functioning and effective referral mechanism** at EU

borders was identified as a key priority in order to ensure access to asylum procedures.

3. **Developing legal and regular channels to Europe for protection and employment.** EU policies should give priority to ensuring access to the EU and implementing legal paths of entry and stay. This should not only include people searching international protection, but also for reasons of employment, education, family reunification, etc.

EU migration policy should include a more effective and flexible use by EU Member States of the already existing “**EU mobility toolbox**” comprised of existing pieces of EU legislation and covering various thematic streams: first, access for employment at various skill levels; more flexible visa policies and lifting visa requirements to Syrians and Eritreans, as well as ensuring safer access to international protection in light of EU asylum law obligations.

The **Implementation Plan** mentioned above could also give focus to better and more flexible implementation of existing provisions. While each tool in the toolbox has its strengths and weaknesses, these tools have now been tested by several countries and reviewed in several EU and international discussion fora. NGOs and local authorities are now waiting on the EU institutions and the Member States to act on their promises to use their toolbox to open channels that actually match the level of needs for protection and workers.

4. **Respecting rights of undocumented migrants and de-criminalising migration and humanitarian assistance.** Developing legal channels should not serve as an excuse to criminalise those who still need to use irregular channels. A key priority should be to create a **firewall between immigration control and access to justice and services for migrants, which** would enable migrants and civil society organisations to report smugglers, violence and abuse without risk of being deported. The upcoming revision of the Facilitation Directive should **exempt criminalisation of humanitarian assistance.**

5. The Role and Contributions of Civil Society Organisations

Participants confirmed the importance of **consulting and involving civil society, migrants’ organisations as well as local and regional authorities in the design, implementation and evaluation of EU migration policies.** These

EUROPEAN MIGRATION FORUM CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

actors are not simply partners in the implementation of political agreements. NGOs can only do their work well within a well-functioning asylum and migration system, which is the responsibility of national and EU authorities.

Participants underlined **the central role played by civil society in facilitating access to services and justice** as well as the provision of information. As a common starting point to develop the future EU migration policy, civil society are needed **to ensure more effective and independent control** of the compliance, implementation and practice of the common EU rules in all EU Member States on the ground, which all too often leads to responsibility shifting and lack of accountability. Participants signalled worrying examples of this in Ceuta and Melilla (Spain), the situation in Evros (Greece) or the criminalisation of undocumented workers.

For example, civil society and migrants' organisations can **provide training and evidence allowing for more transparency** on the proper application of EU policies in practice. NGOs and local authorities could also play a more active role in EU policy making by **de-bunking myths about irregular routes, legal channels and 'pull factors'**. Authorities should also strengthen their participation with civil society at national and European level to critically assess the **use and effectiveness of EU migration funding**: where is this funding going, to whom and for which purposes? What is the role or kind of input by civil society and migrants organisations?

Notwithstanding these varied roles for practitioners, NGOs and local authorities have neither the mandate nor the means to compensate for structural problems or a lack of investment. NGOs and local authorities can help to make safer routes for mixed migration flows in the Mediterranean so long as EU and national authorities provide more legal immigration channels, more structures and resources for SAR and a greater commitment to the long-term social inclusion of refugees and migrants. And yet to date, recent related EU initiatives such as the [Task Force for the Mediterranean](#) have not consulted with NGOs to guarantee an effective multi-actor response.

The EMF was seen as a major opportunity to create a new consultative forum of and led by civil society. Participants wanted to inform EU policy developments and give feedback on concrete proposals and legislative initiatives from relevant EU institutions. For the next EMF, further reflection would be required to design the structure and preparation of a civil society-led forum as well as on the appropriate **follow-up to the EMF recommendations by the EU institutions.**

ANNEX 1

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. WORKSHOP A: Access to Asylum Procedure at the Borders

Chair: Stephen Ryan (European Commission)

Rapporteur: Kris Pollet (European Council on Refugees and Exiles, ECRE)

1. The gap between theory and practice with regard to access to the procedure

The EU legal framework has improved and has been enhanced with additional safeguards to protect persons arriving at the border against refoulement and to ensure access to the asylum procedure in EU Member States. Also the EU Charter and the case-law of the ECtHR include important guarantees. Yet the progress on the theoretical level contrasts sharply with the deteriorating situation in practice at certain EU external borders as there are consistent and credible reports about push-backs at land and sea borders. Reports by EU agencies do not always reflect the situation on the ground, while NGOs often do not receive feedback on their reports to EU institutions on fundamental rights violations.

Key conclusions:

- Training of border officials and authorities likely to come first into contact with migrants is important to ensure effective access to the procedure and to make referral mechanisms work in practice. Training efforts must be stepped up for border guards. Ongoing initiatives by EASO and Frontex to organise joint trainings, and to develop a specific practical tool on access and incorporate access in a new EASO training module on fundamental rights and International law are positive steps. However, such trainings and tools should make clear that the role of border guards and law enforcement authorities, is to refer individuals to the competent authorities, and not to enter into any assessment of protection needs.
- The establishment of functioning and effective referral mechanisms at the border is key to guarantee access to the asylum procedure at the border. It is the primary responsibility of the State to ensure that an effective referral mechanism is in place and this is a precondition for NGOs to play a meaningful role in the referral mechanism. Provision of information by NGOs to migrants before referrals to specific procedures are made are crucial (see example of information desk at Fiumicino Airport) to ensure that migrants make informed decisions
- Monitoring of implementation/application of EU legal standards must be a priority and NGOs need to be consulted. This is necessary for EU institutions and Agencies to get the real picture. NGO's reporting human rights violations

to the European Commission must also be informed about the follow-up and steps taken to address those complaints.

2. The specific challenges related to arrivals at sea

Deaths at sea are not a new phenomenon since October 2013. People have been dying in the Mediterranean since 2002, but there is a sense of urgency only since the Lampedusa Tragedy. The journey itself is traumatising and this requires specific measures.

Key conclusions:

- States and commercial vessels must uphold their search and rescue obligations in practice. The EU and its Member States must ensure sufficient search and rescue capacity in the Mediterranean to compensate for the end of the Mare Nostrum operation.
- Need for more capacity and resources to address the needs of traumatised persons (at first reception and throughout the system to address the specific needs of such vulnerable groups)
- Need to address the issue of what to do with those who died at sea (need to have a system in place to contact families, arrange funerals, identification etc.)
- While the primary responsibility to ensure that a functioning system of first reception post disembarkation is in place, NGOs with specific expertise have a key role to play in the first reception immediately after disembarkation. Therefore, their presence in sea ports is key in order to ensure a swift and efficient process. NGOs must be sufficiently resourced to perform this role and the sustainability of multi-agency projects, such as the Praesidium Project must be ensured, including through funding under AMIF.
- The involvement of NGOs in first reception systems contributes to the overall quality of the system. This covers a range of activities such as the provision of basic needs (food, water, and clothes) but also the provision of information and first legal advice before actual referrals are made to specific procedures. The latter assists in early identification of vulnerable persons and thus better procedures.
- Presence of cultural mediators and interpreters at all stages of the procedures related to first reception is key and must be ensured.

3. Gaps in the functioning of the CEAS

There is a growing trend in several EU Member States whereby asylum seekers refuse to apply for protection in the first country of arrival and refuse to be registered/fingerprinted in order to avoid the application of the Dublin Regulation.

There are a number of reasons for this trend, including the appalling reception/detention conditions in certain Member States (confirmed by important ECtHR judgments) and the lack of integration perspectives in the country of first arrival. Moreover, access to the procedure and access to adequate reception conditions and integration perspectives are linked. Quality of reception conditions impacts on quality of the asylum procedure. This means that the CEAS is not functioning and creates situations of legal limbo. At the same time there is a need for more solidarity and burden-sharing between EU Member States.

Key conclusions:

- Effective implementation of the asylum acquis at high level of protection must be ensured and should be a key priority. There is not only need for measures to ensure mutual trust between Member States but also to ensure and warrant trust of asylum seekers in the system.
- Make use of the Temporary Protection Directive and the solidarity mechanisms included, in particular in the context of the Syrian Refugee Crisis.
- Take the necessary steps to ensure mutual recognition of positive asylum decisions and transfer of protection status across the EU to achieve the objective of a uniform status, valid throughout the Union as laid down in Article 78 TFEU

4. Legal channels to reach protection in the EU

EU must acknowledge that the situation in the Mediterranean is also a result of the measures that the EU has taken. We have created this situation ourselves and there is a range of measures (Eurosur, visa restrictions, carrier sanctions, immigration liaison officers abroad, and cooperation with third countries on irregular migration) that create barriers and prevent persons in need of protection of reaching the border and accessing the new legal framework. This must be addressed as well.

Key conclusions:

- There is a toolbox of measures that can already be used today by Member States to ensure safe access (resettlement, humanitarian visa, more flexible family reunification, lifting of visa restrictions). Those tools may address different situations and needs and may contribute to reduce the number of refugees needing to resort to irregular channels.
- There is a need for an increased commitment of the EU and the Member States to international solidarity with those countries hosting the vast

majority of refugees, including through a significant increase of the number of resettlement places in the EU.

- Legal channels will not solve everything and refugees will continue to be forced to use irregular channels. They should not be penalised (through detention or other measures) for doing so as per Article 31 Refugee Convention.
- There is a need to address the issue of legal channels not exclusively from the refugee perspective. Mixed flows include persons migrating for other reasons. Need to explore/further develop the possibilities in the Family Reunification Directive/Single Permit Directive/Long Term Residence Directive/ negotiations on COM Proposal on EU Visa Code.

5. The role of civil society organisations and local authorities

Local civil society organisations and local authorities are part of the solution when it comes to ensuring access to the procedure, be it at the border or on the territory. Yet policy makers tend to only include NGOs and local authorities at the stage of implementation, while EU policies (such as the strategies developed in the context of the Task Force Mediterranean) simply don't involve civil society organisations.

Proposal for key recommendations:

- Involve Civil Society organisations and local authorities not only when implementing policies with regard to first reception, identification and referral of migrants arriving at the border but also when designing them.
- Cooperation between civil society organisations and authorities must be based on a clear understanding of their respective roles. The role of civil society organisations is not to simply fill the gaps where the authorities fail to meet their obligations

2. WORKSHOP B: Integration of Beneficiaries of International Protection

Chair: Laura Corrado (European Commission)

Rapporteur: Ezequiel Iurcovich (Rete G2)

1. All beneficiaries of international protection (BIPs) have the right to long-term social inclusion in their country of asylum and the European Union. To meet this obligation under international and EU law, most Member States will need to undertake reform based on the identified best practices from their and other countries. All EU Member States should provide BIPs with the rights and targeted support that they need as soon as possible after arrival and for as long as necessary to access mainstream services and attain self-sufficiency. Specific attention has to be paid to vulnerable groups (i.e. minors, physical and mental trauma, women with a dependent legal status and the illiterate). Member States are recommended to negotiate and agree personalised integration plans with BIPs and other immigrants based on individuals' specific needs and life goals.

2. The reception conditions for asylum-seekers set the starting point for the integration of BIPs. The experience of detention, poor reception conditions, unmet health needs and forced economic and educational inactivity create new traumas for BIPs that lead to their long-term social exclusion. Member States promote societal integration by granting asylum-seekers early and equal access to the labour market, decent housing as well as basic language and vocational training. Upon recognition, Member States should eliminate any differences in the protection status, rights and treatment of refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, following the spirit of the revised CEAS Directives.

3. Equal rights and secure legal status for BIPs and their families should be seen as preconditions for their integration. Member States should facilitate the requirements and procedures for family reunification and long-term residence based on the most favourable provisions allowed in the EU Directives. BIPs also require greater legal and financial support to access these rights. Facilitated naturalisation should be recognised as especially important for countries of asylum to provide BIPs with full protection, security and a positive sense of belonging.

4. Targeted policies for BIPs must actively partner with BIPs and their organisations in order to address their most urgent and specific needs: missing documentation from their country of origin, family tracing and reunification, recognition of their formal and informal qualifications, enrolment in the education system. Civically

active BIPs should also be empowered as spokespersons for a more positive image in the media and as partners to address structural discrimination against BIPs and other immigrants.

5. Overall, a welcoming society must build and show solidarity with beneficiaries of international protection. Projects should prioritise cooperation with NGOs practitioners and the use of extensive networks of volunteers in order to build skills, social networks and solidarity. Mainstream specialised service-providers and ministries must make specific commitments to support BIPs. Effective employment services, long-term language learning options and in-kind/in-cash housing support are critical in this transition phase. Public schools are also powerful tools for social inclusion. A specific agency at national level is needed to facilitate cooperation, mainstreaming and the transition to long-term mainstream services.

6. At European level, the European institutions should provide greater support for more equitable integration policies across the EU Member States. The European Commission and Parliament should increase their commitment to the proper enforcement of CEAS and immigration directives by monitoring procedural and practical obstacles, for example on family reunification and long-term residence. Funding should be dramatically increased for the integration of BIPs and other immigrants. The combination of the European Refugee and Integration Funds cannot lead to decreased spending on integration. Moreover, the European Commission must cooperate with NGOs and local authorities to address integration issues using the European Social Fund in combination with EU Asylum and Migration Funds. In the near future, the EU institutions should also propose greater options for the free movement for refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection.

3. WORKSHOP C: A Comprehensive Approach to Counter Migrant Smuggling

Chair: Simona Ardovino (European Commission)

Rapporteur: Annica Ryngebeck (Social Platform)

These proposals are motivated by the need to reduce the risk and harm migrants are exposed to when finding themselves in a situation of irregular migration and targeted smuggling activity that is clearly dangerous to migrants.

1. Respect the rights of migrants in an irregular situation, in the drafting and implementation of an EU plan against smuggling (*such as human rights obligations when apprehending migrants in an irregular situation*).

2. Develop and implement (additional) regular migration channels to the EU for protection, employment and family reunification. Such regular channels should include opportunities also for low-skilled employment (*beyond Seasonal workers*). Safe regular channels are a necessity to stop migrants from turning to smugglers as the last resort.

3. Create a firewall between immigration control and access to justice and services for migrants. A firewall would enable migrants and CSOs to report smugglers, violence and abuse by e.g. employer, landlord or partner, without risk of being deported (*e.g. good practices exist on regional and local level when it comes to enabling migrants to report gender based violence*).

4. Revise the Facilitation Directive to exempt humanitarian assistance from criminalisation. Explicitly exclude punishment for humanitarian assistance at entry (rescue at sea and assisting refugees to seek safety) as well as the provision of non-profit humanitarian assistance (e.g. food, shelter, medical care, legal advice) to migrants in an irregular situation. It should also make clear that renting accommodation to migrants in an irregular situation without the intention to prevent the migrant's removal should not be considered facilitation of stay, while ensuring that the legal system punishes those persons who rent accommodation under exploitative conditions ([FRAs opinion 2014](#)). This would enable migrants to access basic services without fear of being reported and service providers to provide services without fear of repercussions. *FRA demonstrates a growing trend towards criminalization and punishment on national level; CSO can help in gathering more concrete evidence.*

5. Consider circumstances of aggravation and mitigation when prosecuting smugglers. Take into account if the migrant being smuggled is in need of international protection and if the smuggler took into account the safety of migrant being smuggled.

6. Put in place an Implementation Plan for the EU and Member States comprising all European regulation protecting migrants, irrespective of status. Such plan should have a multidisciplinary approach and place the migrants human rights at the centre. It should include providing practitioners and authorities an overview of what rights migrants have to access protection, e.g. with the Victims' Directive, the Employers Sanction Directive and the Anti-Trafficking Directive. (*Inspiration can be drawn from the publication [The EU rights of victims of trafficking](#), 2013*).

7. Debunk myths and misinformation about migration. (*Role of CSO*)

- a. Misleading and/or lack of information about the dangerous and risks with irregular routes, by smugglers and the diaspora.
- b. There is no substantial evidence that regular migration channels (*e.g. as feared with the expansion of the EU*) or enhanced protection for vulnerable migrants (*e.g. unaccompanied minors, victims of VAW*) are pull factors.
- c. Existing evidence indicates that large numbers of irregular migrants enter regularly (*e.g. EC [Clandestino project](#), 2009*).

4. WORKSHOP D: Providing Adequate Information in Countries of Origin and Transit

Chair: Philippe Fargues (Migration Policy Centre)

Rapporteur: Marco Cilento (European Trade Union Confederation, ETUC)

- 1.** Considering that a communication strategy should be built starting from the origin country where the migration project takes shape.
- 2.** Considering that the most effective message is delivered by tangible improvements of living and working conditions especially investing more in development cooperation programmes. Messages which talk of freedoms, investments, cooperation, mobility partnerships, jobs, services and stronger democracies.
- 3.** Considering that instability in Africa and Middle East will persist in the coming years and will generate larger displacement of people toward the EU, the EU and the member states should ensure search-and-rescue operations in the Mediterranean Sea with at least the same intensity of the Mare Nostrum operation.
- 4.** Considering that a communication strategy aimed at encouraging legal channels for migration can only be meaningful if legal channels exist and only if international protection procedures may be triggered in origin/transit countries as well.
- 5.** Considering that certain communication instruments have proved to be more effective than others especially among the young generations. Audiovisual materials and short movies if based on anecdotic and direct testimonies can deliver more effective dissuasive messages to those who are planning irregular entries in the EU.
- 6.** Considering that the messages should be tailored on the specific context in each origin/transit/destination countries and adapted to the expectations of the target group of migrants and would-be migrants and refugees. For that purpose a communication strategy should deliver two kinds of messages:
 - a) raising awareness: about risks and dangerousness of irregular arrivals, putting their lives in the hands of criminal organisations, rules on repatriation, etc.
 - b) information on opportunities: how to obtain a visa, a residence permit, a working permit, recognition of diplomas, job offers, presence of organisations, including trade unions that can offer them support once in Europe.

EUROPEAN MIGRATION FORUM CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

7. Considering that criminal organisations recruit people also conveying misleading messages, it is important to oppose them a solid communication strategy which involves authorities and civil society at all levels.

8. Considering that well-managed migration flows implies a communication strategy that starts with a reliable set of pre-departure information but is finalised with a contact place “at destination” where the migrant can receive support, protection and help for integration.

9. Considering that states and local authorities shall be encouraged to increase their efforts in providing pre-departure information to their citizens would-be migrants; that origin and transit states lack of a structured institutional and legal framework in support of those who are shaping a migration project.

10. Considering that civil society organisations (NGOs, trade unions, associations, no-profit economy) are able to reach a larger number of people (refugees, labour migrants, women, etc.) with targeted and tailored messages.

The group recognises that the nature of mix flows requires different approaches in information campaigns that should take into consideration specificities and needs of both migrants and people in need of international protections.

- a. Warns that migration dynamics change fast and information strategies have to be continuously adapted to fit with the changing scenario.
- b. Recommends that goal of campaigns should be to provide accurate information to migrants, including refugees, on alternative legal/regular migration possibilities, risks of travelling irregularly, means for access to international protection, family reunification, and their rights and duties.
- c. Messages should be tailored on the specific context in each origin/transit/destination countries and adapted to the expectations of the target group of migrants and would-be migrants.
- d. Suggests avoiding dissuasive campaigns that are unlikely to discourage people fleeing violence and extreme poverty while informing people of risks and dangers of the journey.
- e. Demands for specific programmes able to reach people in refugee hosting areas and communities.
- f. Recommends insisting in communication strategies based on audiovisual, social media and short movies which are able to tell individual testimonies especially about those who have gone through the journey. These are straight and well-received by the young generations.

EUROPEAN MIGRATION FORUM CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- g. Encourages the establishment of people-to-people services especially promoting info-points, desk offices, online services, telephone lines in places with higher concentration of would-be migrants, migrants in transit or in areas of destination (rural, urban and cross-border areas). Cooperation with local civil society must be promoted.
- h. Asks that new campaigns and the making available of new resources should take into account results of a comprehensive independent assessment of the effects of previous campaigns performed by EU and/or Member States, civil society.
- i. Invites member state consular services to provide better and more accessible information & advice on opportunities for legal migration also through an enhanced collaboration with civil society and migrant organisations.
- j. Insists on the fact that partnerships with organised civil society and the diaspora may result in more effective, extensive, comprehensive, tailored set of messages.
- k. Encourages the setting up of networks which are able to advice and shelter people from the projecting of their migration project up to the destination country.
- l. Invites the EU and member states to involve governments, regional and local authorities and diaspora in their communication strategies. The group recommends that such cooperation would give higher relevance to the respect of fundamental rights in the origin and transit countries.
- m. The most effective message is the one coming from tangible improvements of living and working conditions especially coming from investing more in development cooperation programmes.