

# RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE CROATIAN PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

January – June 2020

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2020 begins the decade of action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the target date of 2030. EU Member States have pledged to implement the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, which recognizes the positive contribution of migrants to inclusive growth and sustainable development, and commits states to cooperate internationally to ensure safe, orderly, and regular migration. In this spirit, the Croatian Presidency should recognize that the EU can only **strengthen its role as a global actor** by further developing the capacity and instruments to meet migration challenges and seize opportunities in ways that consider the interests and needs of both the EU and partner countries.

The Croatian Presidency of the Council of the EU will lead upcoming EU Council discussions on a **new pact on migration and asylum**, a **new comprehensive EU-Africa strategy**, the next **Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)**, and the **European Green Deal**. The Presidency will need to carefully navigate sensitive issues to promote a nuanced debate and pave the way for Member States' agreement on **strategic, comprehensive and coherent internal and external migration governance policies**.

The next **Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)** will be instrumental in implementing the EU's vision. In this context, it will be important that resources for asylum and migration respond to the needs and commitments of both the EU and its partners while also ensuring simpler processes for implementers.

Finally, given the critical role migration plays in the context of **environment and climate change**, the Croatian Presidency should integrate migration into the measures that will be taken in the framework of the European Green Deal and support the development of capacity for institutions at different levels.

## IOM RECOMMENDATIONS

### I. Promote a comprehensive approach to migration governance

In the upcoming EU Council discussions on a new migration and asylum pact and a comprehensive EU-Africa Strategy, IOM urges the Croatian Presidency of the Council of the EU to:

- Advance discussion on reforms for a functioning Common European Asylum System;
- Take account of the potential of orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration to foster sustainable development;
- Foster balanced partnerships on migration through common, co-owned and mutually beneficial partnership models involving all relevant stakeholders;
- Support improvements and investments in the collection, analysis and dissemination of accurate, reliable, forward-looking and comparable migration data for evidence-based policy making;
- Develop and further implement sound return and reintegration schemes together with origin, transit and host countries. Supporting the priorities and capacity of partner countries to strengthen migration management, systems of return and reintegration processes is key;
- Encourage Member States to give serious consideration to sufficiently flexible and accessible legal pathways for admission of migrant workers to the EU and supporting skills mobility partnerships;
- Push for an agreement on the Regulation for a Union Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Framework.

### II. Pursue a long-term budget that facilitates orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration

To advance a long-term EU budget which facilitates orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration, IOM encourages the Croatian Presidency of the Council of the EU to:

- Respond to the needs and commitments of both the EU and its partners through the EU's future spending programmes;
- Promote a rights-based and holistic approach for future resources for asylum and migration;
- Ensure adequate attention to the procedures that will guide the implementation of EU funding for migration in the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and its timely adoption to avoid the risk of gaps and closures.

### III. Promote a *just transition* in the roll-out of the European Green Deal that addresses the complex nexus of climate change and migration

In the interest of a forward-looking climate change policy, IOM recommends the Croatian Presidency of the Council of the EU to:

- Ensure that migration is properly reflected and integrated in the anticipated measures to be carried out in the European Green Deal by highlighting potential actions and implications;
- Encourage capacity building to integrate migration into relevant climate change policies at regional and national levels.

## RECOMMENDATION I. Promote a comprehensive approach to migration governance

IOM welcomes the Croatian Presidency priority for a coherent, comprehensive, sustainable and effective migration and asylum policy comprising external and internal aspects of migration, including legal migration.

The Croatian Presidency of the Council of the EU will be required to provide strong leadership in the upcoming EU Council discussions on the European Commission proposal for a **new pact on migration and asylum**. The Presidency will need to carefully navigate sensitive issues to promote a nuanced debate and pave the way for Member States' agreement on **strategic, comprehensive, and coherent internal and external migration governance policies**.

The implementation of the European Agenda on Migration since 2015 has focused on border management and reducing incentives for irregular migration. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recognize good migration governance as an enabler of sustainable development. Specifically, SDG target 10.7 commits Member States to facilitate orderly, safe, and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies. As such, **migration policies in Europe should be developed in line with these commitments. At the same time, migration should be mainstreamed into EU neighbourhood, international development and cooperation policy.** IOM urges the Croatian Presidency to steer the EU Council to also conclude reforms for a functioning **Common European Asylum System** and to establish **new policies for legal migration**.

Migration is a multidimensional reality that requires **forward-looking, well-planned policies**. IOM therefore calls on the Croatian Presidency to support improvements and investments in the **collection, analysis and dissemination of accurate, reliable and comparable migration data**. This data is essential for evidence-based policy making that can ultimately enhance migration governance to the benefit of migrants and the communities that welcome them.

Balanced **partnerships with third countries** are essential to achieving better migration governance results. Only common, co-owned and mutually beneficial partnership models, involving all relevant stakeholders, are sustainable.

The EU can further develop mutually reinforcing working modalities to govern migration in ways that **consider the interests and needs of both the EU and partner countries**. In the field of return migration for instance, IOM's experience shows that active dialogue, cooperation and complementarity of efforts among State and non-State actors at both national and international levels are fundamental. IOM therefore stresses the importance of **developing and further implementing sound return and reintegration schemes together with origin, transit and host countries**.

Reintegration strategies need to respond to the economic, social and psychosocial needs of returning migrants while also benefitting communities of origin and addressing the structural challenges to reintegration. IOM recommends that the Croatian Presidency continue to **support the priorities and capacity of partner countries to strengthen migration management, systems of return and reintegration processes**.

IOM recommends that the Croatian Presidency urge Member States to give serious consideration to sufficiently **flexible and accessible legal pathways for admission of migrant workers to the EU**. Permanent and/or temporary admission of high-, medium- and low-skilled third-country workers can help to address labour needs. Training migrants under **skills mobility partnerships (SMPs)** is a good model for facilitating regular migration and mobility for migrant workers. SMPs help migrants acquire new professional skills or improve existing ones. Mobility is organized, within legal migration channels, and the costs of training and matching are at least partially covered by the country of destination and/or

employers. This not only benefits countries of origin and migrants, but also destination countries by facilitating access to skills that are in demand.<sup>1</sup>

IOM calls on the Croatian EU Presidency to push for agreement on the Regulation for a Union Resettlement and Humanitarian Admission Framework. The Croatian EU Presidency should ensure that resettlement remains as a humanitarian and protection tool and a durable solution for the most vulnerable refugees, and not be used as a migration management tool. Resettlement should also not be made conditional upon a reduction in irregular migration and third countries policies of readmitting and returning their own nationals, which would undermine its humanitarian, needs based and protection approach.

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<sup>1</sup> OECD, [Migration Policy debates: What would make Global Skills Partnerships work in practice?](#). N° 15, May 2018.

## RECOMMENDATION II. Pursue a long-term budget that facilitates orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration

Croatia takes over the Council Presidency in the final year of the current Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and faces challenges in pursuing timely agreement on the EU's budget for 2021-2027. IOM shares the Presidency's view that the next MFF must be ambitious, balanced and sustainable as a prerequisite to achieving the goals of the European Union. Looking ahead to plans for a Conference on the Future of Europe, a European Green Deal, and a Pact on Migration and Asylum in 2020, it is essential that the next MFF has the appropriate resources, priorities and procedures to **implement a strategic and long-term vision.**

To achieve orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration, **the EU's future spending programmes must respond to the needs and commitments of both the EU and its partners.** Proposals in the MFF to leverage development assistance to secure cooperation on migration may represent a contradiction with development principles and the pursuit of meaningful partnerships. At a global level, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Global Compacts and other relevant international frameworks provide a valuable basis to identify shared priorities in pursuit of well-managed migration and migration governance.

In cooperation with European civil society organizations and UNHCR, IOM also calls for a **rights-based and holistic approach for future Union<sup>2</sup> resources for asylum and migration.** In this context, IOM joins its partners in recommending that the future Asylum and Migration Fund addresses vulnerability and ensures protection; safeguards policy coherence in non-EU countries; implements inclusive partnerships in practice; and ensures coordinated and significant resources for migrant and refugee integration.

Furthermore, IOM urges the Croatian Presidency to **ensure adequate attention to the procedures that will guide implementation of EU funding for migration** in the next MFF. Although based on requirements of the EU's structural funds, the new Common Provisions Regulation (CPR) will equally apply to asylum and migration funds within the EU under shared management. To facilitate multi-stakeholder partnerships and access to technical expertise, IOM encourages clear guidance in the CPR and relevant internal funds on the treatment of international organizations that have been positively assessed by the European Commission. The recently amended EU-UN Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA) can already be used by EU Member States to simplify contracting of UN organizations when awarding grants under shared management.

Finally, IOM calls for the **timely adoption of the MFF** and/or an adequate bridging strategy to avoid the risk of gaps and closures in EU-funded programmes across sectors, including migration, as was experienced in many EU Member States at the start of the previous MFF in 2014.

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<sup>2</sup> IOM, [Our call for more humane, transparent and effective resources for asylum and migration in the Union](#). 11 June 2019.

## RECOMMENDATION III. Promote *just transition* in the roll-out of the European Green Deal that addresses the complex nexus with migration

Croatia takes over the Council Presidency at a time when the EU is set to move forward with the proposed roadmap of the European Green Deal, which outlines ambitious measure that can be taken for a sustainable green transition<sup>3</sup>.

Climate change impacts are being felt across Europe. The Arctic region is warming faster than any other region globally and the Mediterranean faces increased risk of drought, forest fires, and biodiversity loss.<sup>4</sup> **The movement of people is and will continue to be affected by disasters and environmental degradation.**<sup>5</sup> IOM commends the EU's intensified ambitions to address the adverse effects of climate change through the formulation of the European Green Deal and welcomes the EU's recognition that such challenges require integrated responses and strong cooperation with all partners to build resilience.

In line with the 2015 Paris Agreement<sup>6</sup>, Sendai Framework of Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, IOM encourages the Croatian Presidency to **ensure that migration is properly reflected and integrated in the anticipated measures to be carried out under the European Green Deal** by supporting interventions which will (i) avert, minimize and address displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change<sup>7</sup>; (ii) aid and protect such displaced populations<sup>8</sup>; and (iii) create enabling conditions for migration and its consequences to support climate action<sup>9</sup> in both partner countries and Europe so that no one is left behind.

IOM recognizes that the implications of transitioning to a low-carbon and sustainable economy can also have “downstream” impacts on migration. As a consequence of economic restructuring, changes in labour demands (especially within energy-intensive sectors) will cause ripple effects along the supply chain, which may require workers to look for opportunities abroad. It is therefore important that workers, including migrant workers, in vulnerable sectors and/or regions are supported through re-skilling, and that the principles of *just transition* are promoted within Europe and beyond.

To **integrate migration into relevant climate change policies at regional and national levels**, IOM recommends that EU Member States undertake capacity building initiatives for improved cross-sector policy coherence. Capacity building can help deepen understanding of the nexus between migration, environment and climate change and improve policy coherence so that progress in one area does not undermine progress in another. An intersectoral coordination mechanism should be instituted to identify capacity gaps and provide practical tools as well as good practices of how migration can be mainstreamed into measures that aim to help protect the climate and the planet.

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<sup>3</sup> The European Commission proposes to address climate change through a set of new measures that will fall under [the European Green Deal](#), including a European “Climate Law”, revision of Energy Taxation directive, EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change, Farm to Fork Strategy, Just Transition Mechanism, EU Industrial strategy, Circular Economy Action Plan, screen and benchmark green budgeting practices and European Climate Pact.

<sup>4</sup> European Environmental Agency, [Climate Change Impacts and Vulnerability in Europe 2016. An indicator-based report](#) (2017).

<sup>5</sup> Environmental Migration Portal, [Migration, Environment and Climate Change: Evidence for Policy \(MECLEP\)](#).

<sup>6</sup> United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), [The 2015 Paris Agreement](#)(2015). It recognizes that States have obligations regarding the human rights of migrants when taking climate action.

<sup>7</sup> UNFCCC, [Report of the Task Force on Displacement](#) (2018).

<sup>8</sup> IOM, [Migration, Environment and Climate Change](#).

<sup>9</sup> IOM, Chapter 9 - Human Mobility and Adaptation to Environmental Change. In [World Migration Report 2020](#) (Geneva, 2019).



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