

RECOMMENDATIONS TO
THE CZECH PRESIDENCY OF THE
COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

July – December 2022

Executive Summary

As the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union commences, EU Member States are facing an extraordinary situation as they welcome large numbers of people fleeing Ukraine. The impact of the Ukraine crisis and displacement on the European continent is multifaceted and will likely be long-lasting.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) recognises that the EU's response, including the activation of the Temporary Protection Directive and financial mobilisation, demonstrates an unprecedented expression of solidarity and a positive step in the admission, reception and support to displaced persons in the EU.

As EU Member States continue to host people who have fled Ukraine, focus is shifting from first reception needs to a long-term approach encompassing economic and social inclusion and participation. Against this backdrop, IOM is presenting four recommendations to the Czech Presidency which aim to contribute to a comprehensive approach to achieving safe and regular migration in the context of the Ukraine crisis and beyond.

The mid- and long-term inclusion of migrants requires a holistic, needs-sensitive, multi-level and flexible approach. IOM calls on the Czech Presidency to implement the EU Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion factoring in age-, gender- and disability-sensitive elements while strengthening local authorities' capacities for inclusive service provision and coordination across different sectors and levels of governance. Ensuring inclusive and non-discriminatory access to healthcare services remains critical for both migrant and public health.

In light of the European Commission's proposed plans on legal migration, attracting skills and talent to the EU and the implementation of the Talent Partnerships, IOM invites the Czech Presidency to support the enhancement of labour migration procedures. Sustainable development and mutual prosperity for all parties involved should remain at the core of EU legal and labour migration schemes.

IOM would like to draw attention to the issue of legal identity as a core enabler of sustainable development and safe and regular migration. IOM encourages the Czech Presidency to support legal identity as a tool to both facilitate access to migrants' fundamental rights and enable regular channels of migration.

Further to the importance of identification, there is a need for enhanced digital technologies and systems to enable migrant registration and access to essential services. IOM therefore recommends that the Czech Presidency promotes well-integrated and interoperable digital tools in migration management at the EU level and beyond.

In the area of return and reintegration, IOM outlines an approach which promotes sustainable reintegration benefiting all parties involved. IOM welcomes the EU's efforts to enhance the effectiveness of return procedures and processes to ensure that international standards are adhered to. IOM recommends to the Czech Presidency to prioritise data collection on readmissions and mainstream return, readmission and reintegration into broader cooperation on migration and development.

Finally, with the 27 Conference of Party of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP27) in Egypt approaching, IOM invites the Czech Presidency to focus on increasing support to the countries and people most vulnerable to climate change impacts. IOM recognises that the negative impacts of climate-related displacement can be minimised for migrants, sending and receiving regions by increasing adaptive capacities and recommends that the Czech Presidency supports adaptation strategies, programmes and projects to this end.

IOM RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Flexible and Sustainable Inclusion and Labour Mobility Pathways for Shared Prosperity

Migrants' economic and social participation is fundamental to successful legal migration and social cohesion. As the war in Ukraine continues, the development of tailored and flexible inclusion pathways and community-based approaches become ever more necessary. IOM encourages the Czech Presidency to implement the ambition of the EU Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion, adopting age-, gender- and disability-sensitive approaches, and to step-up efforts to ensure equity for all who are displaced.

Welcoming measures should span a continuum from early reception and basic service provision, such as healthcare and education, to mid- and longer-term planning that includes access to housing, skills profiling, matching and recognition, language acquisition, training, labour market participation and career development. Approaches that foster mutual understanding and social cohesion are essential. Timely and sufficient planning, accompanied by capacity building measures at local level are key to maintaining public support.

As part of the EU's ongoing recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, inclusive and non-discriminatory access to healthcare services remains critical. IOM calls on the Presidency to leave no one behind and advocates for the removal of institutional, administrative, sociocultural and physical barriers to access health care services. Particular attention should be paid to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of women, children and persons with disabilities, including those recently displaced who may face additional challenges accessing quality healthcare and psychosocial support.

Strengthening the capacity of local authorities to provide inclusive service provision is crucial. Equally important is improving the capacity for coordination across different sectors, levels of governance, and between government and non-government actors. IOM has long engaged in strengthening the capacity of municipalities and regions in these areas, and stands ready to support the Presidency in taking this work forward.

Furthermore, migrants make significant social, cultural and economic contributions to societies, especially when mobility occurs with dignity and safety. In a context marked by an ageing population, structural skills shortages, the green and digital transitions, and COVID-19 recovery, it is critical to leverage the opportunities that migration presents.

IOM welcomes the Commission's approach to legal migration set out in its Communication on Attracting Skills and Talent to the EU. Market-responsive, accessible and predictable labour mobility pathways, at all skill levels, are essential components of a comprehensive, forward-looking migration policy. The implementation of such enabling legal frameworks requires pragmatism. In this regard, it is essential that administrative procedures are agile and accessible both to employers and migrants. Similarly, IOM welcomes the launch of the Pilot EU Talent Pool for people fleeing Ukraine and looks forward to the future development of this tool.

IOM invites the Czech Presidency to support the optimization of labour migration procedures so that they are clear, time-bound and efficient, and to engage employers from the start. In light of the imminent implementation of the Talent Partnerships, the Czech Presidency may consider a participatory, multistakeholder design of such schemes. IOM's [Skills Mobility Partnerships](#) (SMPs) may serve as a model which integrates mutually beneficial skills development and labour mobility components at its core. Similarly, IOM invites the Czech Presidency to advocate for more regular avenues for refugee labour mobility, including by building on and expanding the work of the Global Task Force on Refugee Labour Mobility.

Comprehensive and balanced partnerships with priority countries of origin and transit is a key component of the Pact on Migration and Asylum. IOM encourages the Presidency to ensure that sustainable development and mutual prosperity for all parties involved remain core objectives of these partnerships. It will be important to foster further coherence between the internal and external dimensions of migration policies, in line with the 2030 Agenda.

It is equally vital to protect migrant workers who are often disproportionately vulnerable and subject to abuse and exploitation across global value chains in a wide range of sectors. IOM welcomes the Commission's Proposal for an EU Directive on Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence and invites the Presidency to lead Member States in further protecting migrant workers against such risks. IOM also invites the Czech Presidency to consider the protection of migrant workers as complementary to mechanisms such as employer sanctions. IOM's [International Recruitment Integrity System](#) (IRIS), the [Montreal Recommendations on Recruitment](#) and the Corporate Responsibility in Eliminating Slavery and Trafficking ([CREST initiative](#)) provide actionable recommendations for a rights-based, migrant-centered labour supply policy, in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

Finally, migrants contribute to the economic, demographic and social revitalization of fragile territories affected by climate change, depopulation and economic decline. IOM invites the Presidency to strengthen its support for conditions that empower migrants to contribute to the EU Green Deal and Long-Term Rural Vision by considering migrants in skills anticipation and reskilling measures and fostering their participation, also in rural areas.

2. Digitalization and Legal identity for Safe, Orderly Human Mobility

IOM recalls that approximately 1 billion people globally still live without legal identity. The implications of this global legal identity gap are far-reaching: ordinary day-to-day public services such as education and health care, opening a bank account, paying taxes, and the right to vote are inaccessible without a legal identity. Lack of legal identity documents also prevent people from migrating to another country through regular channels and equally hamper readmission and return to a country of origin.

Seeking to close the gap, IOM invites the Presidency to support legal identity and documentation for migrants in countries of origin and transit as a core enabler of sustainable development, and safe and regular migration. In addition, the registration and identification of people on the move is necessary for them to access their most fundamental rights, including access to public services and the employment market.

In the EU, and as part of the electronic Identification, Authentication and Trust Services (eIDAS) regulation¹, access to digital identity for migrants will be required to access essential public services. It also supports the identification of persons who may be in a vulnerable situation, including unaccompanied children. Aiming to strengthen access to legal identity, IOM recently launched its Institutional Strategy on Legal Identity. The strategy serves as a roadmap for States and presents a global platform for the exchange and promotion of good practices to advance legal identity systems.

Similarly, at a time when EU Member States are facing an increased number of arrivals, notably from Ukraine, it is important to strengthen collaboration to identify solutions to address the risk factors that vulnerable migrants face, including victims of trafficking. Building on IOM's and the Commission's efforts in the field of Anti-Trafficking as part of the response to the crisis in Ukraine, some solutions may be identified in the exchange of digitalization practices to promote safe, orderly human mobility. Swift digital registration and issuance of electronic identity, access to public services and interoperability of systems not only serve people but also support intra-EU coordination.

Digital technologies and systems are central enablers. Data processing technologies, biometrics, digital surveillance, e-personal health records and digital identity as contactless solutions lower administrative costs and enhance data exchange and coordination. IOM stresses that the sharing of personal data should be handled with care to protect migrants' best interests, and ensure that they are fully aware of any implications for their human rights.

¹ <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/eidas-regulation>

Additionally, with global efforts to negotiate a new pandemic treaty and revise the International Health Regulations, IOM encourages the Presidency to strengthen governance and leadership by promoting inclusion of mobility on the global health agenda and building global consensus on border mobility management during pandemics. In this regard, digitalization will play a decisive role in the resumption of cross border mobility, including through the recognition of COVID-19 vaccination certificates and access to e-health for migrants.

IOM is currently developing a Digital Maturity Assessment tool specifically designed for migration, health and identity management authorities. The tool will facilitate the development of a roadmap with recommendations for digitalization to strengthen a country's digital maturity prior to the process of digital transformation on migration, health and identity management. In line with the upcoming EU IBM digital tools², IOM invites the Czech Presidency to further promote well-integrated and interoperable digital tools at the EU level and beyond. Such advances will significantly improve registration, reduce border crossing time, reduce risk factors leading to trafficking in human beings, and enhance access to essential services, thereby supporting integration.

3. [Dialogue and Partnerships for Readmission, Effective Return and Sustainable Reintegration](#)

Under the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, the EU will establish migration partnerships with key countries, covering the full spectrum of employment, development support, trade, visa and returns. These partnerships should reflect the interests, needs and priorities of all stakeholders – including the countries of origin, the returnees and their communities – building trust among all.

IOM recognizes that assisted voluntary return and sustainable reintegration can benefit all parties involved. When properly implemented, readmission cooperation frameworks contribute to ensuring that return procedures adhere to international standards. IOM welcomes EU efforts to enhance the effectiveness of return procedures and processes by addressing some of the main obstacles in readmission cooperation, such as identification and the issuance of travel documents. IOM recommends that the Czech Presidency further

² <https://frontex.europa.eu/media-centre/news/news-release/frontex-ready-to-support-member-states-with-entry-exit-system-DfoONt>
<https://frontex.europa.eu/future-of-border-control/etias/#:~:text=ETIAS%2C%20what%20it%20means%20for%20travellers%3B%20what%20it%20means%20for%20Frontex&text=The%20European%20Travel%20Information%20and,belong%20to%20the%20Schengen%20Area>

supports data collection on readmissions and integrates return, readmission and reintegration into broader cooperation on migration and development.

Furthermore, IOM encourages the Czech Presidency to enhance the implementation of the EU Voluntary Return and Reintegration Strategy. Reintegration support should include tailored assistance at individual, community and structural levels; be articulated within regional and national migration governance systems; and build on existing collaborative structures in partner countries, such as inter-ministerial and multi stakeholders committees, or national referral mechanisms developed in the context of EU funded initiatives.

Future EU support to Migrant Protection, Return and Reintegration should maintain a whole of route approach. It is important to capitalize on and improve the investments of the EUTF for Africa and preserve a comprehensive approach, avoiding fragmentation and potential protection gaps for migrants en route, stranded or returning to countries of origin.

4. Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Building for the Most Vulnerable

The Working Group II Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) Sixth Assessment shows that the extent and magnitude of climate change impacts are much larger than estimated in previous assessments.³ The report also recognises that some communities are more vulnerable to climate impacts than others, which is closely linked to social inequality. As the EU prepares for the 27th Conference of Parties (COP) of the United Nations Framework Convention of Climate Change (UNFCCC), IOM calls on the Czech Presidency to strengthen support to the most vulnerable countries and people to mitigate climate change impacts.

The IPCC Report also recognises that the negative impacts of climate-related displacement for migrants and sending and receiving areas can be minimised by increasing adaptive capacities. The report acknowledges that this will improve the degree of choice under which migration decisions are made. It also suggests that this will, in turn, ensure safe, orderly and regular movement of people within and between countries.

IOM, therefore, advocates for increased support for adaptation, including solutions for people to move, for people on the move and for people to stay. In this context, IOM welcomes the recognition of the role of adaptation strategies, programmes, and projects in reducing climate-related displacement in the EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change.⁴ Special attention must be given to improving the access of most vulnerable countries and people to

³ https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGII_SummaryForPolicymakers.pdf

⁴ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52021DC0082>

significantly scaled up finance for adaptation and resilience, including scaling up early warning systems, capacity to plan, and addressing climate change-related migration.

The IPCC report recognises that some loss and damage is irreversible and the most vulnerable communities will continue to feel the adverse impacts, including displacement, regardless of climate change mitigation and adaptation actions. IOM, therefore, recommends that the Presidency continues to make all efforts to secure stronger commitments from EU Member States, European institutions and the international community to support the Santiago Network in its goal to catalyse demand-driven technical assistance to avert, minimise and address loss and damage in developing countries, including displacement.



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