

## **Strengthening the Global Status for Migrants and Refugees: the need for evidence-based policymaking.**

The refugee and migratory issue is today one of the most important challenges facing by the international community. Citizens and governments feel that they need to bend cautiously on this event and look for approaches that will provide solutions to the problems that have risen.

My country, Greece, has from the very beginning stated in all tones that the refugee and migratory problem is not just a problem that concerns a single country or a continent, but it is a matter that will become more and more a global matter. Although migratory flows to Europe in the last period have been reduced, the continuation of the conflicts and the inability to formulate both global and local policies, sustain the problem and create a potential focus of controversy for the countries of Europe but also worldwide.

We have to be honest. No one can feel relieved while the turmoil in the Middle East is raging. Let us not forget that refugee flows have not happened without cause, but are the result of concrete interventions that have resulted in the destabilization of entire countries. In this case, an international effort for peace and the cessation of hostilities in the Middle East is absolutely necessary.

This should be our primary goal if we are to be realistic. Perhaps is the only way if we want to achieve safe, orderly and more regular migration.

Over the next few years, if we take into account the current evidence, it is almost certain that refugee and migratory flows will increase. This conclusion is not a destructive "prophecy", but stems from the fact that alongside the wars, other problems that are capable to cause mass

movement of populations are rising.. Ecological burden and water scarcity, economic inequalities, religious fundamentalism, as well as the intervention of the Great Powers, are good causes to increase refugee and migratory flows. We have been witnessing an upsurge in the conflicts in Syria and elsewhere and we have to be extremely worried.

For all of these reasons, Greece welcomes the effort for a Global Compact to address refugee and migratory flows. We are convinced that effective migration management can best be achieved through cooperation between countries of origin, transit and destination , on the basis of a holistic approach, encompassing the legal obligations of the States, the obligations of immigrants and their mutual commitments and recognizing migration both as a challenge and as an opportunity for growth for all countries concerned and for the migrants themselves.

Addressing the issue must be based on two sub-categories. We need, as we said, to have an all-round effort that will identify and cure the causes that lead to mass movement of populations.

Let's stress two points:

1. Violence and conflicts that plague the world today, as well as growing competition and extreme rhetoric, create insecurity around the globe. Organizations that have an international role, such as the UN. , as well as the parliamentarians of all countries, need to inspire the spirit of cooperation, peace and de-escalation of conflicts. We can no longer allow this tragic situation in the Middle East to continue for the sake of power games and economic interests.
2. It is very important to have cross-border cooperation and regional projects and actions between parliaments, and law enforcement agencies as well as local authorities of countries of origin, transit and destination, with a view to prevent the illicit trafficking of migrants and human beings, as well as the prosecution of smugglers and traffickers.

The other category of political and practical measures should aim, on the one hand, at the smooth installation of migrants and refugees in the host countries and on the other, in their integration into the societies that they choose to live.

The integration of migrants into the social and political life of the host countries is a dynamic and two-way process of mutual adjustment. It is based on the host society's commitment to welcome migrants, respecting their rights and culture and informing them about their obligations and, in addition, the willingness of migrants themselves to join and respect the rules and values of their new society.

Of particular importance for migrant integration is access to Education and culture in the host country. In Greece, which is a host country for a large number of refugees, a great deal of effort is being made to create the human potential that will be able to approach the migrants with respect and to impart the language and values of our culture. The country's universities are already developing specialized programs for intercultural education and the transmission of the Greek language to these populations, while in the country's schools there are already integration programs for the children of migrants.

Notable is the fact that , despite the problems there is health care through extensive vaccinations and so managed to prevent some serious epidemic.

At the same time, central information campaigns aiming at raising the awareness of the local population and informing the refugees themselves about their rights and obligations are being carried out.

Another important parameter that assists smooth integration is the participation of migrants and refugees in the decision-making process, especially in matters that concern them. It is important for them to

participate in the democratic process because it makes them feel personally responsible for their lives.

Lastly, migrants' entry into the labor market is of particular importance. Specific regional and local programs need to be developed to gradually integrate migrants into legal and secured work with respect for labor rights. It has often been observed that these people are being exploited by illegal circuits and that is a thing that we should not allow.

But even the above initiatives may not be enough. In addition, initiatives need to be taken at supranational level and there must be decisive changes in immigration policy worldwide.

Let's focus on some points:

- A) The relocation process needs to be broadened and more severe sanctions are to be credited to those countries that are not in line with the spirit of the agreements for safe and regular migration. Already, some African and Asian countries are involved and willing to take part and share this international mobility and move in a positive direction. These efforts need to be stepped up. It is even more necessary to alleviate the differences and to have common approaches on the matter in accordance with the rules of international law.
- B) The Dublin II Agreement needs to be revised to allow refugees in Mediterranean countries who do not wish to remain there to turn to other countries.
- C) A systematic program is needed for the smooth movement of migrants and refugees through legitimate trafficking channels. The opinion that prevailed in some European countries with the closed borders actions but also the actual attitude of the United States itself do not help for safe migration and the existence of legal and safe roads for movement. These behaviors make the differences more acute and fuel the unlawful and inhumane trafficking of people. We must establish and secure the efforts of these people by all means and penalize countries that deviate from the agreed and International Law.

- D) Most developed countries should contribute financially to the least developed countries in Africa and Asia, which are mostly countries of origin, in order to build sustainable societies with developed economies so as people not need to leave their homes by difficulty or by need.
- E) Finally, we believe that the Global Compact on Immigration should be flexible in its implementation so that it can be adapted to the needs of each country and that there should be a flexible mix of international and local rules for the management of migratory and refugee flows. Greece and Italy ,for example, do not have the same needs, in relation to another country that has not received such a huge number of refugees and migrants within its territories, and we must take this seriously.