

**INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION**  
**138<sup>th</sup> Assembly, Geneva, 24 – 28 March 2018**  
**General Debate on the theme**

**"Strengthening the global regime for migrants and refugees: the need for evidence-based policy solutions"**

by Mr. Marinos Moushouttas, MP  
Cyprus

Dear Colleagues,

It is with great concern that I am taking the floor to address this IPU Assembly on this unprecedented migration and refugee crisis that is causing so much human pain and suffering.

Our strongest international response must be based on concerns for peace, solidarity, humanitarian assistance and equitable burden sharing. Diplomacy is also necessary and we must pursue all efforts already underway with all the main stakeholders involved, to reach a political solution that will bring security and stability to Syria and the wider region, to mention just one major hotbed in the world. At the same time, terrorism and the radicalization of the younger generation that has created so many foreign fighters must be combatted without prejudice to human rights and the other core values of this Organization. I do however believe that our common international response must be based on peace rather than war and be driven by our shared conviction that the overwhelming majority of the people caught in the Syrian conflict deserve our unwavering support and humanitarian assistance.

We should redesign our reception and integration policies. We should strive to integrate migrant and refugee populations and treat them as dignified human beings seeking a better life and not as second class citizens. Such attitudes are not only negative and racist in nature, but if they persist, they will constitute a self-fulfilling prophecy, which will only trigger more ghettoization and cultural exclusion and, ultimately, radicalization and violence. We must therefore fully and seriously redesign our integration policies, if we want to continue to believe in our open and pluralistic societies.

This entails of course a substantial financial commitment. I would like to focus on the burden sharing axis. If solidarity is still a key principle governing relations between our governments, then it must become clear that some countries must commit more financial resources than others

who may be more exposed to migratory flows or less endowed in economic terms. Unfortunately, the countries that are more exposed to migratory flows in the South of Europe are also the ones that are facing increased budgetary constraints. Therefore, a more equitable and fair distribution of resources and responsibilities should constitute the cornerstone of our concerted efforts and actions to alleviate this pressing issue and its consequences.

Creative and flexible labour laws and incentives could be adopted and attractive new opportunities and partnerships for employers and employees alike could be initiated. Parallel to this, Europe's development policy should change. Neighbouring countries to Syria, like Lebanon and Jordan, who are hosting large numbers of refugees, should be bolstered, so that they too can address the immediate healthcare, education and subsistence needs of refugees. Similarly, viable economic projects in these countries could contribute to the sustainable development of Europe's periphery.

Thank you.