

Migration Roadmap of the Conference of INGOs for 2017-2018

Considering that, in addition to the humanitarian treatment of emergency situations, a paradigm shift respecting international and domestic law is required to deal with the arrival¹ of refugees and migrants in Europe.

Such a change should be of advantage to all countries, both countries of origin and host countries.

In order to achieve this, public policies in the Council of Europe Member states must meet the needs and expectations of persons who are forced to migrate, take account of the experience and expertise of NGOs working on the ground and consider migration as a potential asset.

Considering relevant international law:

- the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms;
- the revised European Social Charter;
- the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees;
- the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families;
- the United Nations Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others;
- the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime;
- the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime;
- the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime;
- the European Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers;
- the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.

Considering also:

- the Declaration by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on [human rights in culturally diverse societies](#);
- the Council of Europe's cross-sectoral activities aimed at [building inclusive societies](#);
- the Council of Europe "[Intercultural cities](#)" programme;
- the [Action Plan](#) of the Conference of INGOs for 2016-2018, adopted on 25 June 2015;
- the [recommendations](#) of the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights of May 2016;
- the work of the Parliamentary Assembly and of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe.

Considering the action already taken by the Conference of INGOs:

- **In October 2013**, during European Local Democracy Week, a call was issued to local authorities to take action following a tragic event close to the coast of Lampedusa;
- **In January 2014**, the committee concerned held a hearing of researchers and NGOs on the situation on Europe's borders and on the dangers in the Mediterranean for those fleeing from conflicts and poverty;
- **In September 2015**, the same committee held a side-event entitled "Migration and Climate" in partnership with the General Directorate of Human Rights (DGI) of the Council of Europe, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM); an event which received the official COP21 label;
- Following the **September 2015** meeting with the INGOs represented at the Council of Europe and

¹ If one compares the number of migrants entering Europe in 2016, i.e. 354 893 persons, to the total population of the European Union on 1 January 2016, i.e. 510 056 000 inhabitants, one can note that migrants represent only 0, 07%: it is obviously an exaggeration to speak of an invasion ...

the European Union, the President of the Conference of INGOs addressed an [Open Letter to the Ministers' Deputies of the Council of Europe](#);

- **In January 2016**, following the debate held by the Democracy, Social Cohesion and Global Challenges Committee, the INGOs of the Council of Europe confirmed that a large part of civil society no longer felt that its views were reflected in several of the political decisions taken by governments to deal with the influx of migrants and said [No to compromising on values](#);
- **In March 2016**, the [Conference of INGOs expressed its indignation](#) at the way in which refugees arriving in Greece and Turkey were being treated. The Conference of INGOs condemned the signature of the agreement between the European Union and Turkey on 18 March 2016. It called on all Council of Europe member states to make the necessary efforts to ensure decent conditions for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers by facilitating their integration or their return to their country of origin, according to their legal status.
- **On 24 June 2016**, at its summer plenary, the Conference of INGOs held [a current affairs debate](#) on "The treatment of migrants, refugees and NGOs defending their rights. From findings to action", which was attended by different parties concerned by the migration crisis: Greek national NGOs, international NGOs, representatives of the Committee of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly and the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe for Migration and Refugees. The debate led to concrete recommendations, which have contributed to the preparation of this roadmap.

The Conference of INGOs undertakes to:

- 1) **Listen to the experiences of and give a voice to** migrants, refugees and asylum seekers who are being assisted by the INGOs of the Conference, in particular the most vulnerable groups (*unaccompanied minors, women, families, disabled people, the elderly, persons at risk of discrimination etc.*) so that their voice as well as their contribution to countries of transit and of destination, be taken into account by the Council of Europe;
- 2) **Encourage the INGOs** in the Conference to **demand that European Union member states** draw up a common reception policy and, in particular, establish humanitarian corridors so as to enable persons forced into exile to break free from smuggler mafias. Also **encourage INGOs to monitor** new common provisions adopted by the European Union² to ensure that they remain in line with the values of Europe and in particular of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms;
- 3) **Remind** the INGOs of the instruments of international law and the measures required for implementing them in order to increase their level of expertise so that they can assist migrants in gaining access to their rights;
- 4) **Step up dialogue** between NGOs assisting migrants and the public authorities;
- 5) **Publicize the action** and **politically support** NGOs and all committed persons who accompany and help migrants to **defend** them against any interference with their freedom to deliver humanitarian aid; **denounce** their possible criminalization ("crime of solidarity");
- 6) **Promote** the use of the [Intercultural dialogue toolkit](#) of the Conference of INGOs, and the [Learning to live better together with our different convictions](#) training courses³;
- 7) **Contribute** to the Council of Europe's "*Intercultural Cities*" programme;
- 8) **Gather examples** of "inspiring" action taken by NGOs which assist migrants, refugees and asylum seekers;
- 9) **Take part in the monitoring** of the *Committee of Ministers' Guidelines on the promotion and protection of human rights in culturally diverse societies*;
- 10) **Reflect** on a legal framework, even provisional, for the reception of undocumented migrants⁴, in particular climate migrants and irregular migrants who are eligible for expulsion but who cannot be deported⁵;
- 11) **Reflect** on the causes of migration (including when these may be caused by climate change) and to remain vigilant that the necessary standardization of migration law does not violate the provisions of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and of Article 19 of the Revised European Social Charter.

² In particular with regard to the application of the Schengen Agreements and the Dublin Convention

³ And all the documents produced by the Council of Europe, in particular:

- *The White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue*
- *The intercultural city step by step – Practical guide for applying the urban model of intercultural integration (2013)*

⁴ The IOM estimates that almost 99% of migrants are forced migrants: people who have no choice.

⁵ Report by the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), "[Fundamental rights of migrants in an irregular situation in the European Union](#)", November 2011.