

16 May 2025

NETWORK OF FOCAL POINTS ON MIGRATION

Working methods

Following the invitation from 3 April 2019 of the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Migration and Refugees (“SRSG”) to Council of Europe member states to designate focal points in relevant ministries dealing with migration issues, in view of setting up a network,

Noting the support of the Committee of Ministers and of the Secretary General for setting up this Network and the decisions of the Helsinki Ministerial Session, from May 2019, which underlined the need to continue addressing the challenges arising from global migration,

Aiming to develop and reinforce the direct dialogue on human rights of the Council of Europe with authorities in the member states responsible for asylum and migration issues, through confidential exchanges of information,

Building on the discussions held during the First meeting of the Network of Focal Points on migration (“the network”) on 28-29 November 2019 in Strasbourg and the consultations with the focal points that followed,

Taking into account that the Division on Migration and Refugees (DMR) was created at the Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law (DGI) on 1 February 2025 to follow-up on the action by the former SRSG and its mandate includes suggesting assistance and support to member states, particularly through the Network of Focal Points on Migration,

The DMR has accordingly updated the following working methods and general principles for the operation and development of the Network:

1. Network of Focal Points on Migration

1.1. The Network is composed of persons designated by Council of Europe member states to act as their Focal Point.

1.2. Experts and organisations which are not members of the Network may be invited to its meetings and thematic sessions for exchanges of views. Joint meetings with other networks and organisations can also take place.

2. Main objectives of the Network

2.1. The Network was set up with the objectives:

a. to facilitate the sharing among the Focal Points of information of mutual interest and relevance to address human rights challenges in the field of migration;

b. to facilitate the sharing with the Focal Points of information on relevant Council of Europe activities (and the work of intergovernmental committees dealing with migration-related topics);

c. to enhance the information exchange between different institutions or agencies responsible for migration issues within the member states with a view to ultimately promoting a better understanding of current and emerging challenges faced by member states;

d. to exchange good practices in the field of migration.

2.2. Based on consultations with the network, its objectives could be reviewed.

3. Communication and sharing of information

3.1. The Focal Points shall communicate via a restricted-access website (the Network's Intranet site and the new NFP Teams Platform). The content of the information on this website shall not be public.

3.2. Without any intention to manage communication between Focal Points, the contact details of all of the Network's members shall be accessible on the Network's Intranet site and the new NFP Teams Platform to all of the members of the Network.

3.3. Any information which the Network and the DMR decide jointly to make publicly available shall be made available on the website of the DMR, after additional internal processing in accordance with the principle of precaution.

3.4. At national level, where appropriate, Focal Points are encouraged to establish or use the existing national migration networks, composed of stakeholders active in the area of migration and asylum, including representatives of governmental, non-governmental and international organisation, in order to enable communication between them and the Council of Europe.

4. Working methods

4.1. The Network shall meet at least once per year in a plenary meeting, closed to the general public. The meeting shall be convened by the DMR. The convocation shall be sent to the Focal Points, together with a draft agenda, at least 30 working days before the opening day of the plenary meeting.

4.2. The plenary meetings will be chaired by the DMR.

4.3. In addition to the plenary meeting or under its umbrella, thematic sessions can be organised with members of the Network or with national experts, with or without external participants.

4.4. The agenda of the meetings and thematic sessions is proposed by the DMR based on consultations with the Network and ongoing priorities of the Council of Europe, and with its Member States, which may present suggestions to the agenda of the meetings and thematic sessions.

4.5. In between meetings, the Network will continue to operate in respect of planned or ad hoc information exchanges and requests, via emails with DMR and via the new NFP Teams Platform.

4.6. Any request for information addressed to the Network shall be made in one of the two official languages of the Council of Europe and shall consist of concise, numbered questions. Where necessary, they shall be accompanied by brief factual information to assist the understanding of the request. Responses shall likewise be drafted in one of the two official languages of the Council of Europe.

4.7. The members of the Network are encouraged to submit any information they consider relevant to their counterparts and to the Council of Europe with a proposal to disseminate it among all members of the Network. The Focal Points shall be responsible for the content of the information provided and for circulating information within their institution and at national level, where relevant.

4.8. If considered necessary for specialised expertise in a certain field, the Network may decide on the creation of thematic groups within the Network, or on the appointment of thematic rapporteurs, on a voluntary basis.

4.9. The coordination and management of the Network shall be the responsibility of the DMR.

4.10. Based on the monitoring of the Network's activity and suggestions from Member states, the DMR can undertake reviews of the working methods.