



Assises de la Coopération Décentralisée
Regions and Cities for Development
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ROUND TABLE 2 on Migration
Tackling the migration challenges

Abstract

This round table aims to promote a common understanding through the exchange of points of view, experiences and know-how between different Local and Regional Authorities (LRAs) committed to build common integration policies of migration.

Co-leaders

AECXID – Agencia Extremeña de Cooperación Internacional al Desarrollo
ARRICOD – Association des professionnels de l'action européenne et internationale des collectivités territoriales
Regione Emilia Romagna
Union of Dannieh Municipalities

Background information

The IOM defines migration as *'the movement of a person or a group of persons, either across an international border, or within a State'*. This concept includes *'refugees, displaced persons, economic migrants, and persons moving for other purposes, including family reunification'*.

Since 2014, hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing wars and escaping poverty have arrived in the European Union in an unprecedented wave since the Second World War. They came from areas such as Western and South Asia, Africa, and the Western Balkans. The UNHCR registered one million sea arrivals in 2015 and 362,000 in 2016, mostly from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and Nigeria. In parallel, migration has risen in the political agenda of the EU and in general OECD countries.

The EU is committed to significantly step up the engagement and the efforts in order to address migration in a comprehensive way, both in the short and long term. With this purpose, the European Agenda on Migration was launched in June 2015. The EU also recognizes a strong nexus between development and migration, stated in the 2030 Agenda on sustainable development. In this context, EU development cooperation plays a key role to address both challenges, and the opportunities, presented by the current global refugee and migration situation.

Co-leaders:



The European Agenda on Migration aims for a comprehensive migration policy: *'All actors, Member States, EU institutions, International Organizations, civil society, local authorities and third countries need to work together to make a common European migration policy a reality'*.

When it comes to cities and regions, the CoR has pointed out that a multi-level governance approach is appropriate, since local and regional authorities are confronted most directly with the challenges and opportunities of integration. *'Integration is a two-way process that should form part of the framework of rights and obligations for the third country national and the host society'*, says the CoR, emphasizing that *'the social and economic costs of the failure to integrate third country nationals may well exceed the investments needed in integration policy'*. Local and Regional Authorities are at the frontline and very concretely involved in providing services and support to migrants, asylum seekers, refugees, returnees and their families. All the levels of government, civil society and other stakeholders are called to act shoulder to shoulder.

Content

Discussions will focus on the new practices of the international and decentralized cooperation policy of LRAs. The migratory crisis has pushed cities and regions to implement new practices appropriate to a new context, requiring quickly big changes.

LRAs have a very important role to play in the management of the so-called 'migrants crisis'. This RT will discuss how cities and regions tackle this issue. The practice of LRAs all over the world evidences a need to change the way to work with people coming from abroad, changing approaches, increasing awareness and mobilization of civil society and opening new services for migrants and refugees.

Secondly, LRAs also establish direct partnerships for cooperation to development, which have a direct incidence on migration. This RT will also give an overview of the practices of cities and regions confronted with the management of the 'crisis of the migrants' establishing relations of partnership between territories of origin and reception.

Finally, the concept of 'co-development' will be discussed as response to a need and opportunity to enrich both societies, assuming that migration cannot slow down or stop, and that countries cannot be subject to a closed list of choices to tackle the migration issue. Co-development allows mutual enrichment, mutual learning, and evolution both here as there. Co-development is a positive way to link migration and development, accepting that migration and its protagonists can be essential vectors for the development of both societies of origin and reception. Assuming that the migrant is an agent of development can be instrumental in the successful co-management of the migration issue. The co-development approach can be the way to re-think the relationships between rich and poor, North and South, sending and receiving countries in parity, since both are recognized and admitted the need for the other to co-develop.

Questions

- 1) *Which are the latest developments and perspectives of LRAs facing the migratory crisis?*
- 2) *Should a permanent partnership between LRAs of countries of destiny and origin exist and how can it be established?*
- 3) *How can the co-development approach contribute to the migration crisis?*

