



## **SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FIFTH MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON MIGRATION**

Friday 11 March 2022, 9:00 – 11:00

### **1. Opening by the Chair**

*Successive Chairs: Alessandro Alfieri, Member of the Italian Senate, Italy; Dimitris Kairidis, Member of the Hellenic Parliament, Greece*

The Chair, Mr Alfieri, opened the meeting by expressing full solidarity with the Ukrainian people and by strongly condemning the war against Ukraine. He welcomed the fact that the EU had reacted and spoken in a single voice, referring inter alia to the strong sanctions adopted by the EU. He welcomed in particular Member States' agreement on the activation of the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD), which offers minimum protection standards and guarantees burden sharing. He noted that some of the recommendations adopted by citizens went in the same direction as the Council Decision on temporary protection. One of the main goals of the activation of the TPD is to lower pressure on the asylum system and to allow the persons to enjoy harmonised rights across the EU: residence, access to labour, housing, medical assistance, education for children. The Commission will coordinate information exchange among Member States in relation to their reception capacity and identified needs for support. The EU Agencies can provide further support at the request of Member States. Some of these issues were touched upon in the citizens' recommendations.

The Chair announced that the summary record of the previous meeting held on 1 March was considered approved and will be translated in all languages and uploaded on the platform.

### **2. Follow-up on the presentation by citizens of the recommendations from European Citizens' Panel 4 and National Citizens' Panels relating to migration**

**2.1 Legal migration** (see table in annex)

**2.2 Irregular migration** (see table in annex)

**2.3 Asylum, integration** (see table in annex)

Three citizens from the European Citizens' Panels presented their recommendations. They were very keen to see what would happen with the citizens' recommendations after 9 May. In particular, they stressed:

- That the core of their request is to have a common European concept of migration respectful of Human Rights and efficient; a migration policy must be transparent and based on solidarity;
- The citizens recommended an overhaul of the EU asylum and migration rules and replacing the Dublin system;
- The need for common procedures to ensure that the national and the EU institutions are on same line;



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- The need for monitoring, for an office on asylum that is supportive and ensures procedures can be processed quickly, and, if need be, to send people back to safe third countries;
- The institutions need to take decisive action quickly, and this is ever more important given the situation in Ukraine.
- Common and faster procedures when it comes to processing/assessing asylum applications;
- Extending powers of the EU Agency for Asylum to facilitate the redistribution of migrants, especially of asylum seekers and refugees, within the EU;
- The rapid establishment of asylum centres for unaccompanied minors;
- The need for the EU to work on the root causes of migration, by investing in the countries of origin;
- better integration paths for refugees and asylum seekers;
- Encouraging regular migration of skilled workers for the labour needs and for measures to counter irregular migration as source of impoverishment of Member States;
- To promote a unified system for the recognition of professional and academic qualifications; and the setting up of an EU agency set up for this purpose including integration, vocational training, for which EURES could form the basis;
- The importance of harmonizing labour conditions throughout the EU, including by strengthening the role of trade unions at transnational level as to decrease the disparity of labour conditions among Member States and thus reduce the internal economic migration;
- The screening of citizens in the countries of departure, in the countries of departure of those suitable for jobs in the EU, based on public criteria, which could be implemented by a European Agency;
- Informing and educating citizens about migration through educational programmes for children, media campaigns and incentives for NGOs activities.

The representative of the French Citizens' Panel also presented recommendations linked to migration, starting by underlining that their recommendations overlap the recommendations from the European Citizens' Panels and have many similarities. He notably highlighted the following:

- The creation of a specific office on migration policy, to ensure the respect of migrants fundamental rights, integration through education and respect of European values;
- Establishing an office ensuring the cooperation and development aid would manage flows from their beginning and EU development policies so that migrants prefer to stay at their home, and would thus stem migratory flows;
- The necessity to involve all Member States equally, independently of whether they are border countries;
- The creation of a European Charter for a unified and humane Europe, approved by all States and validated by citizens.



### **3. Discussion**

The Chair structured the discussion according to the three overarching topics.

#### **3.1 Legal migration**

Members of the Working Group generally welcomed citizens' recommendations on legal migration. The following remarks were made:

- In addition to creating safe legal pathways, it is important to offer dignified reception;
- Recommendation 7 was welcomed by several members of the Working Group; A member also reacted to recommendation 7 by stating that not only high qualified workforce was needed;
- Recommendation 9 was also put forward as an important recommendation by several members;
- A member also highlighted that the war in Ukraine and flux of refugees had changed the labour migration system, as the refugees coming from Ukraine are being granted access to the labour market;
- The importance of contributing to the workforce as a means for fast integration into EU society was also highlighted by a few Members;
- The need to combat internal EU migration by increase standards in the countries less attractive and to tackle the brain drain effect in EU was also mentioned;
- A member also reacted to recommendation 30, while supporting the overall objective asked whether temporary labour migration had been considered by the citizens.

#### **3.2 Irregular migration**

During this discussion, many members made links between the recommendations on irregular migration and asylum, integration.

- Several Members welcomed recommendation 10 and the focus on human rights. One member mentioned that recommendation 10 should rather refer to "high minimum standard" of reception and welcoming facilities, rather than on "equal".
- Several Members also urged for the rephrasing of the term "illegal" into "irregular" migration;
- some Members called for the distinction between legal and irregular migration and to provide open solidarity towards real asylum seekers coming from Ukraine, and to stop irregular migration;
- Some stressed their opposition against the instrumentalisation of migration;
- Few Members expressed their hesitancy towards recommendation 8 on giving more powers to Frontex, while stating that this could come at the condition and guarantee of more transparency;
- Several other Members welcomed recommendation 8 and insisted on the need to protect the EU's external borders, and for Frontex to fulfill its current mandate. In this context, a Member also urged for more financial and technical support from the EU to protect the external border,



and a Member also referred to the instrumentalisation of migrants by third countries. The need for a strong protection of the external borders and pre-screening of asylum seekers was also mentioned in this context and more financial and technical support for Member States with external borders;

- A few raised that border protection and a solidarity formula need to be found; Solidarity could be done in different ways, not only via relocation, but also material, human, administrative or financial resources;
- As regards the mandates of EU Agencies, a Member mentioned that they need to fulfil their existing mandates on operations on the ground; the situation with UA showed that Member States were able to manage alone the high flow of migrants, without the support of the Agencies;
- The need for an efficient return policy for people who are not granted an asylum request was called for as well;
- Several Members welcomed recommendation 27 on the partnerships with countries of origin to tackle migration at its root causes; cooperation with third countries was important to find a political solution and to deal with root causes;
- The fact that a terrorist attack was carried out by migrants was also referred to in one intervention, whereas others stressed the need to avoid criminalising migrants; find a way for return, fight illegal migration, people smugglers, serious organised crime
- Keeping security and reforming asylum rules cannot be at the expense of EU values of solidarity, legality, and assistance.

### **3.3 Asylum, integration**

- Refugees should be able to use their skills and the best way of integrate them is through jobs;
- Several members echoed recommendation 33 on replacing the Dublin System;
- in relation to recommendation 33, a Member pointed out that the number of refugees already received by a Member State and their capacity should be taken into account when quotas are set; also, the need for dignified welcome reception facilities;
- On recommendation 35, several members highlighted that EU border states need to benefit from solidarity from other Member States, and also referred to the fact that solidarity can be applied in various forms, for instance with financial support;
- the need to involve the local and regional levels to ensure integration of migrants was stressed.

Towards the end of the discussion on the topic of migration, a member questioned the integrity of the citizens' selection process, which sparked strong reactions from the citizens' component. In particular, one citizen wished to clarify that the member had misinterpreted her words.



#### **4. Summary by the former Chair**

The former Chair welcomed the progress in the Working Group, and acknowledge his optimism on the substance that will come out of the proceedings. He condemned the invasion of Ukraine. Overall, he believed this could provide a push for Europe to unite more and become stronger. He recalled that some countries were very opposed in 2015 to the refugee inflows, while the same countries are today at the forefront, dealing with the current crisis, and showing more generosity, which he welcomed. He believed this was a positive development that would allow to realise that common problems needed common solutions.

He concluded the discussions:

- On legal migration: stressed the need for legal pathways with various support, information, and awareness raising;
- On irregular migration: human rights were non-negotiable, are indissociable from this topic, and excessive burden on EU border states, the support, solidarity, and the aid to the countries of origin needed to be addressed;
- Regarding asylum, integration: it is essential to tighten and consolidate national policies into an EU common system.

Regarding the allegations by a member on the integrity of the selection of citizens, the former Chair considered that those should be brought up to the plenary and the co-organisers should respond in the most comprehensive and transparent way, so that there be no doubt over the representativeness of citizens and of their recommendations and proposals.

#### **5. Closing by the Chair**

The Chair thanked the Working Group Members for their contributions, and looked forward to the next steps.



**Annex I: Clusters of recommendations**

Clusters	Recommendations
<b>Legal Migration</b>	European Citizens' Panel 4: 6, 7, 9, 28, 30 Lithuanian (LT) Citizens' Panel: 9
<b>Irregular Migration</b>	European Citizens' Panel 4: 8, 10, 27, 35 French (FR) Citizens' Panel: Change 2 Lithuanian (LT) Citizens' Panel: 10 Dutch (NL) Citizens' Panel: 3 ( <i>in section on migration</i> )
<b>Asylum, integration</b>	European Citizens' Panel 4: 29, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 38, 40 French (FR) Citizens' Panel: Change 13 Lithuanian (LT) Citizens' Panel: 2, 3, 8 Dutch (NL) Citizens' Panel: 1 and 2 ( <i>in section on migration</i> )



**Annex II: list of members registered for the meeting**

Mr	Carmelo	ABELA	Council
Mr	Arnoldas	ABRAMAVICIUS	Council
Mr	Alessandro	ALFIERI	National Parliaments
Ms	Abir	AL-SAHLANI	European Parliament
Mr	Konstantinos	ANDREADAKIS	European citizens panels
Mr	Marc	ANGEL	European Parliament
Mr	Malik	AZMANI	European Parliament
Mr	Pernando	BARRENA ARZA	European Parliament
Mr	Gunnar	BECK	European Parliament
Mr	Magnus	BERNTSSON	Local/Regional representative
Ms	Marjolijn	BULK	European Economic and Social Committee
Mr	Jaroslav	BŽOCH	National Parliaments
Mr	Luís	CAPOULAS SANTOS	National Parliaments
Ms	Liina	CARR	Social Partners
Ms	Iness	CHAKIR	National citizens panels/events
Ms	Laura Maria	CINQUINI	European citizens panels
Ms	Gabriella	CÍVICO	Civil Society
Mr	Angel	DZHAMBAZKI	European Parliament
Ms	Karoline	EDTSTADLER	Council
Ms	Julia	EICHBERGER	European citizens panels
Mr	Joseph	ELLIS	National Parliaments
Mr	Harris	GEORGIADES	National Parliaments
Mr	Vasil	GEORGIEV	Council
Ms	Elsie	GISSLEGÅRD	National citizens panels/events
Ms	Sunčana	GLAVAK	European Parliament
Mr	Ľudovít	GOGA	National Parliaments
Ms	Hafida	GUELLATI	European citizens panels
Ms	Gabriela	HEGENBERG	European citizens panels
Ms	Ylva	JOHANSSON	European Commission
Mr	Dimitris	KAIRIDIS	National Parliaments
Mr	Jeroen	LENAERS	European Parliament
Mr	Cees	LOGGEN	Local/Regional representative
Ms	Oudekki	LOONE	National Parliaments
Mr	Arminas	LYDEKA	National Parliaments
Ms	Aurora	MEJÍA ERRASQUÍN	Council
Ms	Augusta	MONTARULI	National Parliaments
Ms	Nathalie	OBERWEIS	National Parliaments
Mr	Oszkár	ÖKRÖS	Council
Mr	Philippe	OLIVIER	European Parliament
Mr	Laurentiu	PLOSCEANU	European Economic and Social Committee



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Ms	Yoomi	RENSTRÖM	Committee of the Regions
Ms	Desislava	SIMEONOVA	European citizens panels
Mr	Andrzej	SKIBA	National citizens panels/events
Ms	Sara	SKYTTEDAL	European Parliament
Mr	Jordi	SOLE	European Parliament
Ms	Petra	STEGER	National Parliaments
Mr	Tuomas Heikki	SUIHKONEN	European citizens panels
Ms	Kata	TUTTO	Committee of the Regions
Mr	Nils	USAKOVS	European Parliament
Mr	Hubregt	VERHOEVEN	European citizens panels
Mr	Dragan	VOLAREVIĆ	European citizens panels
Mr	Krasimir	ZLATINOV	European citizens panels