



DEVELOPMENT AND MIGRATIONS

FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION ON COHERENT POLICIES



1. BACKGROUND

Mobility is **inherent to human nature** and migration is not a recent issue, although globalisation and global interdependence have given governance and management of this phenomenon greater priority in recent decades, placing it at the centre of political and international agendas. **Multiple factors are at its root**, including personal or family motivations, poverty, the search for economic and education opportunities, conflicts, persecution due to social or political factors, natural disasters and environmental impacts, human rights violations, discrimination associated with a group or sector of the population, among others. In the case of forced displacement, the main causes continue to be war, conflicts and violence.

Facilitating **orderly, safe, regular and responsible** migration and mobility of people, particularly through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies, is one of the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This necessarily implies **strengthening cooperation, accountability and international solidarity**. However, incoherences persist across all geographic areas and at all levels: global, regional, national. The polarisation surrounding this phenomenon has made it **increasingly difficult to ensure Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) in this area**.

The **contribution of migrants to sustainable and inclusive economic and social development, both in their countries of origin and host countries**, is substantiated by numerous studies and evidence. Despite the growth of disinformation, stereotypical narratives and xenophobic rhetoric, migration is not primarily a security issue, but rather a **human rights** issue. Indeed, migrants, displaced persons and refugees are particularly subject to **factors of vulnerability** and discriminatory practices, exclusion and human rights violations, including those by criminal and trafficking networks, but also in their daily lives and political, economic and social participation in the countries where they live and work.

Of course, the phenomena of migration and forced displacement also pose **challenges for economies and societies**, as greater diversity implies greater wealth but also greater complexity, generating diverse effects on labour markets, essential services, social cohesion, among others. Migrations should not be discussed or addressed in isolation, but rather considered within a broader framework, namely sustainable development, supporting policies, measures and interventions focused on reducing poverty, combating inequalities, and building more resilient and sustainable communities.

To enhance positive interconnections between migrations and development, coherent and coordinated public policies across various sectors and stakeholders. In particular, concrete measures and **balanced and effective reception, integration and inclusion policies** that allow migrants to fully fulfil their potential, protect their human rights and fundamental freedoms regardless of their migration status, guarantee non-discrimination at all levels and create conditions for equal rights and duties, empower migrants and foster their active contribution to inclusive and sustainable development in both host and origin countries.

“We need a new paradigm for migration, seen neither as a ‘problem to be solved’ nor as a ‘solution to problems’, but as an intrinsic part of a broader process of development and social transformation.”

Hein de Haas, Director of the International Migration Institute and author of “How Migration Really Works”

The pursuit of fairer, more sustainable and inclusive global development implies that various sectoral policies – such as migration, security, trade, agricultural, and food policies, among others – do not undermine the objectives and efforts to eradicate poverty in the most vulnerable countries, but rather actively contributing to promoting development at the global, European, national and local levels.

This is the principle of Policy Coherence for Development (PCD), which is a legal obligation of the European Union and its Member States under the European treaties, as well as a political commitment and a shared responsibility.

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2. DISPEL MYTHS AND PERCEPTIONS WITH FACTS

Despite significant progress in migration research, most facts and scientific knowledge about this area, including its relationship to development processes, are ignored due to political manipulation and the polarisation of public debate on this topic. It is essential to challenge existing myths and counter biased perceptions through facts and reliable information.

Migrations

Most people reside in the country of their birth: only 1 in 30 people is a migrant, representing **3.5% of the global population**. In 2022, there were approximately 281 million international migrants.

In both Europe and other continents, **the majority of migrations are intracontinental**.

The **Mediterranean** continues to be the world's deadliest migration route. In the last 10 years (from January 2015 to June 2024), nearly 30,000 people lost their lives on this route.

Deslocamento forçado

The number of **forcibly displaced people** reached **120 million** in May 2024, having grown for twelve consecutive years. This number includes internally displaced people (within their own country, accounting for more than half of the total: 68.3 million), refugees and asylum seekers (who crossed an international border), and stateless persons. Approximately 40% of displaced people are children.

The number of **refugees** reached **43.4 million** at the end of 2023, having tripled in the last decade. The largest groups come from Afghanistan and Syria (6.4 million each), Venezuela (6.1 million) and Ukraine (6 million), in addition to the approximately 6 million Palestinians under the mandate of UNRWA (United Nations).

Most forcibly displaced people seek refuge in another region of their country or **in neighbouring countries**. Sudan is the country with the highest number of internally displaced people. The countries with the most refugees are neighbouring, or in the same region as, countries at war. This means that **75% of all refugees are in low-or middle-income countries**.

European Union

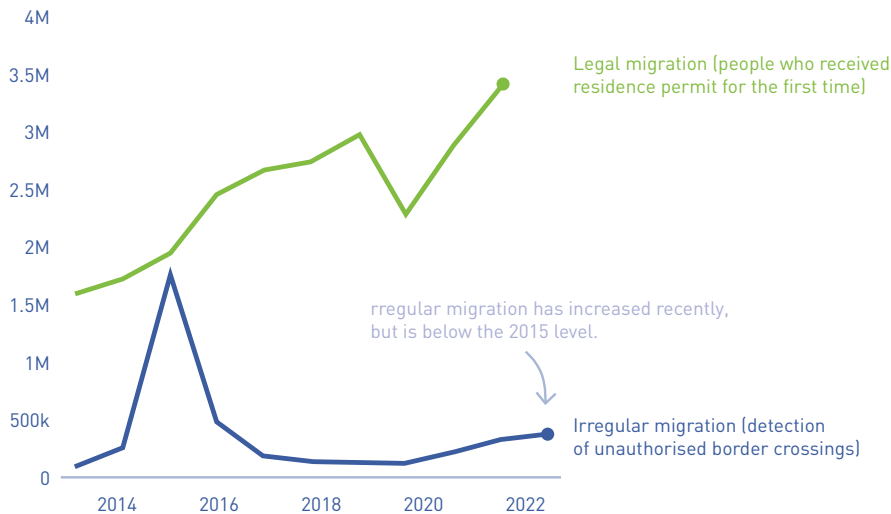
There are approximately 27.3 million third-country nationals residing in the EU. Out of a population of 448.8 million, this represents **6.1% of the total resident population**.

In 2022, approximately 5.1 million people entered the EU, a substantial increase compared to 2.4 million in 2021, due to the number of refugees from Ukraine.

The countries with the highest proportion of foreign-born population (EU and non-EU) are **Luxembourg** (50.4%), Malta (28.3%) and Cyprus (22.7%). In absolute terms, **Germany** (16.5 million people), France (8.9 million) and Spain (8.2 million) are the countries with the highest number of foreign-born residents.

Europe is also a continent of **emigration**: 2.5 million people emigrated from Europe in 2022, either to go elsewhere in the world (1.12 million), or to change countries within the EU (1.4 million). **13.7 million people in Europe are European citizens living in another EU Member State**.

Most immigration into the EU is regular. Irregular entries represent a small fraction of migration within the European area.



Note: Detection of unauthorised border crossings may double the count of people crossing borders multiple times.

Sources: Eurostat; Frontex.

In 2022, nearly 3.4 million first residence permits were issued in the EU, the majority for work and family reasons. Regarding asylum applications, the EU recorded approximately 1 million applicants from third countries in 2022, with **Syria** and **Afghanistan** continuing to be the main countries of origin, as in recent years. Germany, Spain, France and Italy account for **almost three quarters of all applications for international protection in the EU**.

In terms of employment, third-country nationals working in EU countries are **overrepresented in specific economic sectors**, such as: accommodation and food services; administrative and support services, such as customer service centres, logistics and distribution; domestic work and construction. **Essential services primarily employ immigrants**, meaning that Europe needs not only highly qualified immigrants, but also those with varying skill levels for diverse roles and sectors.

Sources: [World Migration Report 2024](#), IOM; [Missing Migrants Project](#), IOM/United Nations; [Global Trends – Forced Displacement in 2023 and 2024](#) data, UNHCR, United Nations; European Union: [Eurostat](#), [Frontex](#), [Council of Foreign Relations](#).

TOOLS
TO CHANGE NARRATIVES:



3. COHERENT INTERCONNECTIONS

Migration contributes decisively to the economic and social development processes of countries of all income levels, worldwide, both of origin and destination countries. By driving inclusive economic growth, enriching the social and cultural fabric, balancing demographic challenges, and fostering institutional and policy innovation, migration is a driver of prosperity and development, both globally and locally.

Many countries around the world are simultaneously origin and destination countries for migration, as is the case with Portugal. Policies that support the integration and empowerment of migrants are crucial for them to realise their potential and maximise these positive connections. Only then will it be possible to mobilise all citizens – nationals and migrants – to build a common future, in which everyone has their place, role and intrinsic value.

Economic benefits



Benefits for migrants: **For many individuals, families and communities, emigration is the best and most important opportunity to improve living conditions**, secure livelihoods and increase income. Many migrants flee hunger and extreme poverty, which constitute a human rights violation, and it should not be forgotten that everyone should have the opportunity for a dignified life. In the case of forced displacement, displaced people and refugees have no other option, and fleeing war, persecution or natural disasters is a matter of survival and basic human security.



Economic growth: In host countries, it is estimated that each 1% increase in a country's immigrant population represents, in the long term, a 2% increase in its per capita income. In the United States, for example, despite political polarisation, increased immigration is linked to a stronger and faster economic recovery after the pandemic. In countries of origin, both remittances sent and the return of migrants after a migration experience contribute to poverty reduction, inclusive growth and improved local development. **Making up just over 3% of the world's population, migrants generate almost 10% of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP).** It is estimated that better integration policies and outcomes could increase migrants' contribution to economies by USD 1 trillion USD per year.



In the labour market: Migrants often meet market needs in their countries of residence and fill the significant labour shortages in skilled and unskilled positions in sectors such as agriculture and fishing, construction and public works, social and health care services, food preparation and transportation. These positions are essential for sustaining growing industries and for economic development, including at the regional and local level. By performing these duties, they contribute to the productivity and efficiency of the labour market in their host countries. **Most advanced economies face labour shortages, and attracting migrants to the labour market should be part of development strategies in all countries.**



Entrepreneurship and innovation: Many migrants start and develop their own businesses, creating jobs and contributing to the dynamism of the host countries' economy. Bringing diverse perspectives and experiences, and possessing diverse technical and professional skills, they can lead to the development of new products, services and business models, as well as generate investment and trade, making an **important contribution to innovation and competitiveness.**



Remittances: Emigrants send a significant proportion of their income back to their countries of origin. These remittances are crucial for the well-being of their families and communities, helping to provide livelihoods and reduce poverty, covering education and health costs, generating savings and investment. **In many developing countries, remittances from emigrants are the main external source of financing for their development**, and are also the most stable and resilient sources, which is especially important in times of economic uncertainty and crisis. Globally, the value of migrant remittances is almost triple that of development aid and far exceeds foreign direct investment flows in low-income countries. In 2023, they reached USD \$669 billion, with the countries receiving the most remittances being India, Mexico and China. However, the countries where remittances contribute significantly to GDP are typically poorer and more vulnerable economies. The prospects for inflation and weak growth in advanced economies in the coming years raise some concerns about migrants' income. The average cost of sending remittances remains high (6.2%), more than double the Sustainable Development Goals target (SDG target 10.c = 3%) for these flows to effectively reach people.



Demographic advantages and balanced public accounts. In many developed countries, declining fertility rates and ageing populations present serious economic and social challenges. **Immigration helps offset demographic imbalances and expand the labour force** (since most migration is for labour, of working-age people), resulting in a better balanced public accounts, as it increases tax revenues and alleviates the pressure on social security systems, which is considerable in older countries. The dynamism provided by the growing younger population is important for economic and social development at various levels.

Social and cultural benefits



Knowledge and skills transfer: Emigrants acquire new skills and knowledge, which they apply in their host countries and can also transfer to their countries of origin upon their return, contributing to local development, education systems, public services, and businesses. **Migrants, particularly students and those involved in academic and scientific fields, contribute to the advancement of knowledge and technology in both their countries of origin and destination, benefiting society as a whole.**



Human Development: Skills flows (*brain drain / brain gain*) vary greatly depending on countries' investment in education and training of their nationals, their ability to attract professionals and technicians from other countries, and incentives for the return of young people who studied abroad, *inter alia*. **Taking measures to encourage circular and temporary migration (e.g., for study purposes) and legal pathways for labour migration**, including measures to increase cooperation on access and portability of acquired benefits, improve the recognition of foreign qualifications, degrees and skills, reduce the costs of hiring migrants, among others, in accordance with national circumstances and legislation, **are drivers of human capital development.**



Diaspora social networks: Migrants form a bridge between countries of origin and destination, establishing transnational networks and communities that facilitate trade, investment, and the exchange of experiences and knowledge between these countries, in addition to serving as true cultural ambassadors. Today, there are more than 200,000 migrant and **diaspora organisations. Migrants who maintain ties with their countries of origin can also act as promoters of conflict resolution, peacebuilding and stability** through these transnational networks and civic engagement.



Cultural richness and diversity: Migration introduce new cultural practices, languages, cuisines, and diverse traditions into host countries, enriching the cultural fabric and creating multicultural environments that stimulate creativity and even productivity. **Exposure to different cultures** and diverse ways of thinking, along with increased intercultural skills in the population, **enhances problem-solving capabilities and drives innovation.**



Human rights and public policies: The presence of migrants can lead host countries to improve their policies on integration, social inclusion, non-discrimination, combating poverty and exclusion, identifying and combating human rights violations, and drive other legislative and social reforms that benefit not only migrants and displaced persons, but all residents of a given country, particularly the most vulnerable groups in society.



Solidarity and cooperation: Multiculturalism and social and cultural diversity encourage dialogue, social relations and cooperation within communities, contributing to less ignorance of the “other” and, consequently, greater empathy and solidarity. At the international level, migration requires dialogue and international cooperation, potentially fostering bilateral relations for its governance, management and resolution of associated challenges.

The other side of the coin: migrants are more unprotected and vulnerable

Migrants in the European Union have higher rates of poverty and social exclusion than national citizens, particularly those from non-EU countries. They also face more precarious employment and lower average wages, many of them working in temporary and/or seasonal roles, and having less access to social protection. In addition to labour rights, they face increased difficulties in accessing other rights, such as health, education and housing, and are potential targets of discrimination based on ethnicity, race or nationality. Those in an irregular situation are more vulnerable and face limitation in claiming their rights. Immigration also raises issues regarding social integration (e.g., language issues) that must be properly addressed in collaboration with various communities. This is why migrants should receive special attention from public policies and support for the most vulnerable social groups, as this is a fundamental element in combating inequalities.

Video: Interconnections between Migration and Development (World Bank)



How to improve integration programmes and policies (Council of Europe)



What about Portugal?

Myths vs. Facts: Coherent arguments

Portugal experiences strong emigration, and the diaspora plays an important role in its development. It is currently the European country with the highest proportion of emigrants and the eighth largest worldwide. In total, more than 2 million Portuguese live in other countries and approximately 30% of young people between the ages of 15 and 39 born in the country, have decided to emigrate. In 2023 alone, the country received almost EUR 4 billion de euros em remittances from emigrants, the highest amount ever, more than half of which came from France and Switzerland – making it the 17th country in the world that receives the most financial flows from its emigrants.

Portugal is among the Western European countries with the fewest immigrants, and only 7.5% of the population living in Portugal is foreign. Although the number of foreign residents has been increasing in recent years, Portugal remains one of the countries with the lowest proportion of immigrants in the total population (18th among the 27 EU countries). Even so, it is one of the countries with the greatest gap between the perception of the volume of immigration in society and the actual reality. According to EU Eurobarometer, and although it has evolved negatively in recent years, the Portuguese continue to view immigration more as an opportunity than as a problem.

“Immigrants take jobs from the Portuguese”

“Immigrants are a financial burden”

“Immigrants are invading us”

“Immigrants don’t contribute to our country”

“Immigrants increase crime and insecurity”

Immigrants are important from a demographic perspective. Analysing the age pyramid, 61% of foreign residents in Portugal are between 20 and 49 years old, while only 35% of Portuguese citizens are in this age group. The Portuguese population is one of the oldest in the world, with 190 elderly people for every 100 young people. Thus, the influx of immigrants helps offset the country’s negative natural population balance, counteracting population decline, and strengthens the young and fertile population, mitigating demographic ageing.

Immigrants contribute decisively to the Portuguese economy. Being predominantly within the working age range, foreign workers are integrated into the labour market and have a higher activity rate than Portuguese nationals (77%, compared to 58%). Immigration in Portugal is essentially labour-related, with many immigrants creating their own jobs and contributing their entrepreneurial initiatives to the generation of more jobs, stimulating the national economy. Without immigration, some sectors and activities in the Portuguese labour market would collapse: in addition to helping fill the labour shortage, they are more represented in essential services and in basic professional groups, and occupy less-skilled jobs, tending to be concentrated in sectors less sought after by the Portuguese. They are also subject to greater job insecurity and earn lower wages.

Immigrants contribute much more than they receive in social benefits. The balance between foreigners' contributions to Social Security and the benefits they receive has been quite positive and favourable to the Portuguese public accounts for several decades. This balance has been growing steadily, rising from 968 million euros in 2021 to 1,604 million in 2022 and almost 2,200 million in 2023, benefiting the Portuguese State. Immigrants not only do not strain the social security system, but they also contribute to its sustainability: foreigners have a higher proportion of taxpayers per 100 residents

than Portuguese nationals (87 vs. 48), and a lower proportion of social benefit recipients per 100 taxpayers than Portuguese nationals (38 vs. 79), making them less dependent on social support than Portuguese citizens.

There is no correlation between increased immigration and increased insecurity or crime. The number of foreign inmates in Portugal has been decreasing on average in recent years, both in absolute terms (from 2,295 in 2016 to 1,900 in 2022) and relative terms (the number of foreign inmates as a proportion of the total decreased by 3.8% in the last decade). This shows that increased immigration is not associated with higher crime, and there is data suggesting exactly the opposite. Conversely, there has been an increase in crime against immigrants. Portugal continues to be recognised as one of the safest countries in the world, raking seventh in the 2024 Global Peace Index.



4. MAIN EXISTING POLICY FRAMEWORKS

The obligations of international law and enshrined human rights emphasise non-discrimination and the inherent dignity of all human beings, which supports the right of migrants to be treated with respect and justice, regardless of their migration status. International law also establishes robust obligations for the protection of migrants in general and, in particular, asylum seekers and refugees. As migration phenomena become more complex, the evolving discourse on migration seeks a balance between the sovereignty of States and the right of people to move in search of safety, better opportunities and living conditions. Some **legal frameworks at the global, European and national levels that interconnect migration, human rights and sustainable development** are highlighted here:

Global

- **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** (1948)

Article 13: 1. Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state; 2. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country. | Article 14: 1. Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution. | Article 15: 1. Everyone has the right to a nationality; 2. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

- **Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees** (1951) and Protocol (1967)

Defines the rights of refugees and the legal obligations of States in their protection. Establishes that people have the right to seek asylum in other countries in cases of war or persecution, and that refugees cannot be forced to return to countries where they face threats to their lives or fundamental freedoms (principle of “non-refoulement”). Its Protocol updates the protection provisions in the face of new situations that generate conflict and persecution. Although the Convention is legally binding, there is no body to monitor compliance.

- **Protocol Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime**, against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air (2000)

- **International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families** (entry into force in 2003) – not signed by Portugal and EU Member States

- **Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration** (2018)

Provides the first integrated framework for international cooperation, albeit legally non-binding, on migration. It is based on 10 guiding principles that promote a people-centred vision, international cooperation, sustainable development and respect for human rights, involving all levels of government and civil society. These principles are reflected in its 23 objectives, which are implemented by signatory States through national plans. **Several European countries do not support the Compact.** The **United Nations Global Compact on Refugees** (2018) defines a framework for more predictable and equitable responsibility-sharing, recognising that international cooperation is essential to generate benefits for refugees and their host communities.

- Other instruments for the international protection of migrant workers – Conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), specifically **Convention No. 97** and **Convention No. 143**.

- **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

Highlights the impact of humanitarian crises and forced displacement on development outcomes. Calls for the empowerment of vulnerable groups such as refugees, internally displaced persons, and migrants, including access for all to lifelong learning, training and education opportunities, as well as the eradication of forced labour and human trafficking. Recognises the positive contribution of migrants to sustainable growth and inclusive development in various areas.



SDG 10 – Reducing Inequalities (targets 10.7 and 10.c)



European Union

- **EU Charter of Fundamental Rights** – Articles 18 (right to asylum), 19 (protection in case of removal, expulsion or extradition) and 21 (non-discrimination)
- **Treaty on the Functioning of the EU** – Article 78 (asylum), 79 and 80 (immigration), and Article 208 (development cooperation and policy coherence)
- **European Consensus for Development** (2017) – paragraphs 39 to 42.
- **Strategy to combat human trafficking** (2021-2025)
- **European Pact on Migration and Asylum** (2024)

It aims to define a more comprehensive and coordinated European response to the challenges of migrations, including several legislative instruments, built around four pillars: secure external borders; fast and efficient procedures; a system based on solidarity and shared responsibility; and integrating migration into international partnerships.



Portugal

- **National Implementation Plan of the Global Compact for Migration** (RCM No. 141/2019)
- **National Plan to Combat Racism and Discrimination 2021-2025** (RCM No. 101/2021)
- **Agreement on Mobility** between Member States of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP) (2021) + Bilateral Agreements (e.g. India in 2021, Morocco in 2022)
- **Portuguese Cooperation Strategy 2030** (RCM 121/2022)

Promotes coordination and synergies between various sectoral policy frameworks and development goals, particularly in the areas of equality and non-discrimination, security and migration, through the active promotion of PCD. One of the priorities includes special attention to the vulnerability factors of migrants and forcibly displaced persons, as well as encouraging measures that implement their positive role in the development of countries of origin, transit and destination.

Interactive tool on Migrations
and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals



Portugal's voluntary national report on the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration



5. INCOHERENT TRENDS AND PRACTICES IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

In the case of the European Union, migration policies are inconsistent **with the fundamental values** it seeks to secure internally and project externally. Division among Member States on this issue reflect the predominance of a security-based approach to the detriment of a humanitarian and/or development approach.

These inconsistencies manifest themselves in trends towards the increasing criminalisation of irregular migrants and the organisations that support them, the instrumentalization of development aid at the service of migration management, an approach to securitising borders at all costs, and the outsourcing of migration management that favours violations of international law, while legal and safe paths are not adequately promoted, which is **inconsistent with the EU's own development needs and interests**.

These trends, which have been reinforced since 2015, increasingly mean that development policies are at the service of migration policies, rather than the other way around, which goes **against the principle of PCD**.



The securitisation of migrations, to the detriment of development and human rights

The **focus on securitisation has become predominant** in the European approach to migration, with strategic considerations regarding migration management taking precedence over humanitarian approaches, socioeconomic development, and full compliance with international law in the protection of migrants and refugees. The attempt to build a **“fortress Europe”** is demonstrated by the large investments made by European countries in implementing more effective and systematic border controls, particularly through information and surveillance systems, in addition to **militarisation** and the construction of infrastructure such as **walls and guarded fences**. The significant strengthening of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (FRONTEX) in terms of mandate and human, financial, and technological resources is also illustrative. There are suspicions and **allegations** of collaboration or complicity in human rights abuses and violations, which have led to investigations by EU institutions, with conclusions pointing to **flaws in its action**.

This security evolution has resulted in **violations of international law**, including cases of **denial of humanitarian assistance**, procedures that **violate the rights of asylum and refugees** (Geneva Convention), particularly with regard to arbitrary **detention** and forced return of migrants, such as so-called **“pushbacks”** (which have become a regular practice in countries like Greece and Hungary), use of force, arbitrary detention, and the use of detention centres lacking decent conditions, which has led to allegations of **crimes against humanity**. The perception of migrants as a threat is also manifested in support for the **militarisation of third-country borders**, including surveillance equipment and techniques, training of military and security forces, and support for structures and procedures to contain migration, particularly to African countries (North Africa and Sahel).

Migrants and the organisations that assist them are being criminalised. In the last two years (2022 and 2023), more than 200 people have faced charges and legal proceedings for their solidarity with migrants, most of them in Greece and Italy, and in most cases for saving or assisting migrants in distress at sea. Human rights defenders and various civil society organisations have also been targeted by administrative sanctions and various forms of pressure, including violent acts. The very act of crossing a border irregularly is being viewed as a crime, with a growing number of migrants facing legal proceedings. Many are accused of facilitating migration, including children. It should be noted that migration is not a crime and that these trends violate international law, as considered by the Council of Europe, the United Nations High Commissariat for Refugees, and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights.

This security-based approach also means **limiting legal, regular and safe** migration pathways to the EU, whether for asylum seekers or for circular migration opportunities, temporary labour mobility schemes, and the circulation of knowledge and skills, on part of several Member States.

This securitisation trend overlaps with other EU strategic documents such as the Action Plan for Integration and Inclusion (2021-2027) or the EU Action Plan Against Racism (2020-2025), both important for migrants' rights. This is particularly inconsistent given the needs of European economies and the benefits of expanding these regular pathways for development.

These policies also have the effect of temporarily diverting migration routes and pushing migrants and refugees toward riskier alternatives, subjecting them to situations of greater vulnerability and putting their lives in danger. Indirectly, securitisation ultimately **favours migrant trafficking and smuggling networks**, as these become the only option for reaching Europe. Thus, migration has become an important source of revenue for trafficking networks, smugglers, local traders, drivers and transportation providers, and even public officials, especially in transit countries such as Libya.

Migration management as a conditionality of development cooperation

The EU has been pursuing a “reverse” PCD, meaning that development policy must increasingly fulfil migration policy objectives. There are several examples of conditionality and instrumentalization of development aid to further these objectives.

This **transnational approach to migration** has conditioned relations with partner countries, resulting in several instances in which the granting of development aid is contingent on the return and readmission of migrants (negative conditionality) or where the EU grants support or finances projects or investments in exchange for initiatives related to migration management (positive conditionality). This conditionality is being addressed in other instruments, such as trade agreements and preferences and can have detrimental effects on countries' development, in addition to potentially strengthening authoritarian or undemocratic governments. On the other hand, border control and migration containment are increasingly emerging as a **key priority of development and cooperation programmes**, particularly with African countries. There is also a growth in EU funds for migration management, whether through

the multiannual budget and its Global Europe instrument, or through Trust Funds and other financing. Several of these funds use the argument that development aid helps reduce migration flows, which is not scientifically based. Furthermore, migrants and displaced persons, in situations of great vulnerability, are increasingly **used by several countries as “bargaining chips”** in negotiations and relations with the EU, either to obtain financial resources or **as a threat to pursue other political or economic interests**.

The growing interconnection between migration policy and the EU's foreign policy can raise several problems and jeopardise the maintenance of the main objective of development policy, which is poverty reduction. The diversion of development aid funds to migration management is especially worrying given the current pressure on aid budget in European countries and the scarcity of available funds, which should be aligned with the priorities of partner countries and directed towards their sustainable development.

EU support for human rights violations in third countries

In recent years, we have witnessed a progressive externalisation of EU migration policy, with a threefold purpose: to reduce migration to the EU, transfer border security beyond EU borders, and improve the efficiency of migrant return and readmission. Three examples demonstrate this strategy: the EU-Turkey agreement (signed in 2016), the growth of cooperation with Libyan authorities, and the proliferation of agreements with third countries. This shifts responsibility for people seeking safety in Europe to countries that often lack the capacity to ensure such protection, have poor performance in the protection of Human Rights, and/or have authoritarian or dysfunctional governments. **Neither Turkey nor Libya meet the criteria** for a safe third country or a safe first country of asylum, as provided in EU law, nor do they guarantee the protection that refugees enjoy under international law.

In 2023 alone, as a result of agreements and support granted by the EU to the **Libyan coast guard**, more than 15,000 people were intercepted in the Mediterranean Sea and returned to Libya, where torture,

enslavement, abuse, and mistreatment of asylum seekers and migrants by State security forces, with widespread impunity, as highlighted by UN reports, organisations such as Amnesty International and Médecins Sans Frontières, and reports to the International Criminal Court. In addition to the forced returns, several journalistic investigations have presented evidence of FRONTEX's collusion with the Libyan coast guard in violations of international law, and there are accusations of the European agency collaborating with violent militias in Libya to prevent more migrants from reaching EU borders.

In addition to this strategy proving ineffective, **agreements with third countries** such as Tunisia, Egypt, Mauritania or Morocco outsource asylum and detention procedures to these countries, failing to guarantee the protection of individuals under international law. EU funding has been used to commit human rights violations against migrants (e.g. abandonment in Sahara Desert), sometimes with the complicity of European countries, which also calls into question the EU's rhetoric as a global actor promoting fundamental freedoms and values.



The rise of hate speech and anti-immigration in European countries

Anti-immigration discourse has been particularly disseminated by **far right** in European countries, capitalising on citizens' general economic and social discontent, and playing a significant role in electoral results, contributing to its expansion to conservative parties. **Anti-immigration, nationalist, populist, and far-right parties have growing influence** both in the governments of European countries (Germany, Finland, France, Italy, Hungary, the Netherlands, Sweden) and in EU institutions, as evidenced by the results of the 2024 European Parliament elections.

The normalisation of **openly xenophobic positions and the promotion of hate speech**, often based on narratives grounded on misinformation, generalisation and manipulation of perceptions about certain social groups, such as immigrants and other minorities, emphasise the artificial division between “we” and “them”. “Replacement theory” is one of the false narratives that has spread and already embodies State ideology in countries like Hungary.

The racist and xenophobic motivations are even more evident when considering the double standard that allowed for necessary solidarity and support for war refugees in Ukraine, but which denies humane treatment to refugees from other origins, such as Afghanistan or Syria.

These narratives influence social perceptions (and their distance from facts and concrete data), which, in turn, contribute to more restrictive and discriminatory positions and policies, aimed at obtaining electoral or other gains. Furthermore, they increase the **normalisation of violence** and human rights violations, which coincide with a failure to effectively protect migrants. They also **exacerbate tensions and polarisations and threaten social cohesion**, contributing nothing to the development of European economies and societies.



Potential inconsistencies in the new EU Pact on Migration and Asylum

The approach to migration has been **a major divisive factor** among EU Member States in recent years, and these divisions were evident throughout the negotiations and approval of the new European Pact (in May 2024), and are expected to **continue during its implementation**. In addition to questions about the **effectiveness and feasibility of full implementation** of the Pact, it has raised well-founded criticism and concerns from many organisations and networks¹, for prioritising the **efficiency of border controls over protection and fair treatment**. The EU applies international law selectively, as the provisions of the new Pact do not apply to refugees from the war in Ukraine.

On the one hand, the Pact, composed of several legislative acts, introduces mandatory pre-entry screening and faster border procedures, involving the detention of asylum seekers at the EU's external borders, including **families with children**, in facilities similar to prisons. This approach can lead to prolonged and arbitrary detention, including the possibility of detaining **minors**, in **violation of fundamental rights**. The institutionalisation of "hotspots" and the emphasis on **expedited return procedures** can also **compromise the rigour and fairness of asylum assessments**, denying asylum to people with legitimate protection needs, forcing them to return to dangerous situations.

In practical terms, it is questionable whether monitoring mechanisms can ensure decent conditions and respect for human rights in detention centres and in treatment at borders, which could increase the vulnerability of specific groups, such as children and trafficking victims. On the other hand, the Pact **reinforces the outsourcing** of migration policy, further transferring border controls to third countries with poor human rights performance, forcing migrants to return without proper asylum procedures, and/or subjecting them to inhumane treatment and various violations of their dignity.

Furthermore, the Pact reveals a **lack of effective solidarity**. Although it includes a mechanism for redistributing asylum seekers among Member States, it is insufficiently robust to address the reality of the numbers. It does not ensure equitable burden-sharing (continuing to leave frontline countries like Greece and Italy subject to disproportionate pressure). It is based on voluntary commitments by Member States, which can refuse to accept these individuals, thus evading their obligations under EU and international law. The setting of an amount to be paid for each refugee that European countries refuse to accept (20,000 euros) places a price on each life and can be considered an attack on human dignity.

¹ These include dozens of civil society organisations, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Médecins Sans Frontières, Caritas, Oxfam, and the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE), as well as academic and research organisations such as the Migration Policy Institute, and others such as the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights.

6. CHECKLIST OF COHERENT POLICIES

Synergies between migration and development can be promoted and driven by concrete approaches, policies and measures, **maximising the positive contribution of migration to equitable, inclusive and sustainable development processes** in all countries.

States have the right to determine their own migration policy and define priorities and requirements in this area, but they must do so **in accordance with international law and with respect, protection and fulfilment of the human rights** of all migrants, regardless of their migration status (which includes the principles of non-regression and non-discrimination).

These efforts require **coordinated action and continued collaboration among various stakeholders, sectors and levels of governance**, to create a favourable environment for migrants, for their benefit and for society as a whole.

Pillars of coherent policies

Protection and non-discrimination

Guarantees respect for human rights and internationally recognised rights of migrants, displaced persons and refugees, including the effective sanctioning of practices that violate these rights.

Inclusion and integration

Active policies for the valorisation, inclusion and effective integration of migrants into host societies, at social, economic, and labour levels, among others.

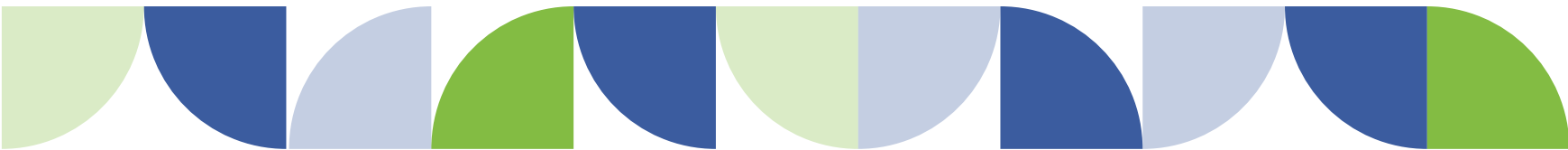
Migrants' contribution to development

Measures to encourage and support migrants' contribution to the economies and societies in their host and origin countries, encouraging them to fulfil their full potential.

Coherent Policies and Measures

At the domestic/national level

- ✓ Empower migrants and societies for full **inclusion and social cohesion**. Combat **all forms of discrimination** in law and in practice, specifically by promoting inclusive, equitable and non-discriminatory access for migrants and refugees to basic services, particularly education (including language-related issues), health and housing. In combating inequalities, pay special attention to migrants when supporting vulnerable social groups, especially in cases where there are multiple and intersecting factors of discrimination and inequality (nationality, gender, ethnicity, etc.), in dialogue with immigrant associations and civil society.
- ✓ Invest in human development and the full participation of migrants and refugees in the **labour market**, including skills development and lifelong learning, the promotion of entrepreneurship (e.g. financing, business training, and mentoring programmes), the recognition and accreditation of academic and professional qualifications, the portability of social rights, and the inclusion of migrants and refugees in social protection systems. Facilitate fair and ethical recruitment and safeguard conditions that guarantee **decent work**, respecting labour rights and implementing effective monitoring and sanctions for violations of these rights.
- ✓ Strengthen **legal and safe migration pathways**, with greater availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration (including through flexible and accessible mobility such as circular and temporary migration, through the implementation of migrant regularisation models, etc.).
- ✓ Combat **criminal networks that exploit** migrants, including preventing and combating human trafficking in the international context of migration.



- ✓ Improve **information, training and awareness** across all sectors of society. Implement robust measures to combat **xenophobia and anti-immigration rhetoric**, promoting an evidence-based public narrative and dismantling myths and false perceptions about migration, through information, knowledge, education, awareness, and interaction between communities to foster mutual understanding and respect. Invest in the **training and capacity building of relevant actors**, especially in the public sector (in the areas of security, justice, etc.), for an appropriate approach to the phenomenon of migration and to migrants and refugees.
- ✓ Create conditions for migrants and diasporas to fully contribute to sustainable development in all countries of origin and destination. Facilitate faster, safer and cheaper **remittance transfers** to countries of origin for emigrants and immigrants, and establish incentives for the use of remittances in investments with impact on development (education, health, productive sector, business, etc.). Implement measures and programmes that promote the **valuable contribution of the diaspora** in social, economic, and cultural terms, including supporting diaspora organisations and networks to channel their skills, knowledge and resources toward development.



In terms of external action

- ✓ Contribute to **saving lives and respecting humanitarian law** in the treatment of migrants, regardless of their migration status, above any considerations or interests, ensuring that **human dignity** is the cornerstone of all policies and practices.
- ✓ Promote **cooperation and dialogue at the international, regional and bilateral levels**, for the coherent, balanced, collaborative and ethical management of migration flows.
- ✓ Implement the **Global Compact** for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, and the Global Pact on Refugees (2018), signed by Portugal at the United Nations, including through the performance of the **National Implementation Plan** on this matter, and promoting the involvement of civil society at all levels.
- ✓ **Monitor the implementation and potential inconsistent effects of the European Pact on Migration and Asylum**; continue to advocate, within European bodies, for a common European asylum system **based on solidarity and shared responsibility, that is fair and equitable**, with common procedures and high standards of protection.
- ✓ Avoid the **instrumentalization of development aid for migration management purposes**, ensuring that the eradication of poverty and the fight against inequalities remain its central objective in bilateral and multilateral relations, including within the scope of the Portuguese Cooperation Strategy 2030.
- ✓ Ensure that **bilateral and multilateral agreements signed in the field of migration and mobility**, including development partnerships with countries of origin and transit, respect the aforementioned international principles and encourage the positive contribution of migration to development, facilitating the transfer of knowledge and initiatives with mutual benefits.

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This document is part of the production of knowledge and awareness about PCD, complemented by other studies and papers prepared. For a more in-depth analysis on this topic, see the study **Development and Migrations: Contradictions and trends (2021)** and the website **www.coerencia.pt**

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