



“UNited for a different MIGRATION”

10 POINTS OF REFERENCE
FOR A PROGRESSIVE
NARRATIVE ON MIGRATION

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Migration is not about numbers, it is about people. Behind the numbers there are men, women, children, all with their own unique feelings, experiences, fears, hopes, and stories; each with their dignity and their right to strive for a better life. As the way we deal with migration will affect their right to move and lead a decent life, and the stability and cohesion of the receiving communities, **progressive migration and integration policies must be grounded in humanity and solidarity** and imply the **utter rejection of measures, initiatives and practices that can harm human dignity.**

Even though migration is reaching unprecedented levels in the present global context, we must recognise that **this is not an emergency: migration is a structural and ordinary feature of our contemporary world**, and short-term, simplistic and narrow policy responses will not only not “solve the problem”, but will likely make the consequences of mismanagement more severe. As the reasons for migration are rooted in the uneven development and distribution of wealth, in the conflicts and persecutions, and in the ravages of nature and climate change, **it is only at the global level that migration can be effectively governed and it is the current global architecture that needs to be changed.**

Given these assumptions, the FEPS Global Migration Group offers the following suggestions as a frame of reference for progressive forces all over the world and to support the implementation of the **Global Compact for Migration**, to be adopted in Marrakesh on 10th and 11th December 2018.

1. Exposing the reality of migration

The discourse about migration is characterised by countless myths. Supporting evidence-based information is crucial, particularly when fact-based evidence is no longer enough, and **information is often manipulated or misrepresented. We must do our utmost to demystify migration**, widening the constituencies that speak about it, resorting to the support of incisive drivers of information and exposing the many misperceptions and blatant lies that circulate, as they feed fear and insecurity, and lead inevitably to the adoption of inappropriate measures both at domestic and international level. The very idea of **migration needs to be normalised** to lessen uncertainties and inspire greater confidence in the capacity of governments to manage it.

2. Endorsing a wide and fair dialogue among countries

Looking at the phenomenon from a single-sided perspective at a time inevitably leads to partial, one-sided responses, and reinforces the “us versus them outlook”. Most states are countries of origin, transit and destination at the same time, and share more interests in a wide and global approach than one may commonly think. We must build on this and develop a **multidimensional dialogue among countries of origin, transit and destination** to identify the most appropriate policies to govern migration flows in the interest of all states and all people.

3. Developing fair and equitable mobility pacts

From the perspective of an orderly management of migration, cooperation among states should be directed to building a **common policy of organised mobility** between countries of departure, transit and arrival, developed in the interest of all. These transnational mobility pacts should provide for co-management and comprise both channels for regular migration and return policies. This would aim to remove incentives for irregular movement and dismantle smuggler and trafficker networks.

4. Promoting safe, orderly and regular migration

Strengthening and increasing the legal possibilities for migrants to reach their countries of destinations safely is not only a moral duty but a necessary precondition to dealing effectively with irregular migration, smuggling and trafficking, and in order to prevent people dying on long and dangerous routes.

5. Rethinking borders

Borders assert the distinction between “us” and “them”; they are not the impassable barriers that people commonly assume, but conventions created to reassure those who live within them and to keep the “others” out. We need to **rethink the very idea of borders** and rediscover and relearn that states are communities, and communities can be exclusive or also inclusive. We must **reconcile the protection of one community’s space with the moral duty to be responsive to the humanitarian needs** of those in search for protection, assistance and/or a decent life.

6. Turning disorder into order

People’s perception of order needs to lie at the very heart of any migration policy. **The state needs to be in control and to be perceived as being in control. Being in control**, however, does not mean closing borders, resorting to arbitrary detention, or arbitrarily expelling newcomers. It means developing and managing legal migration channels, efficient asylum policies and practices, but also border controls. It means having in place and being able to implement precise rules and smooth functioning procedures that are clear and transparent for all, migrants and law enforcers, in the full respect of the rule of law and of the rights of the migrants, and in a context of political accountability. It also means **addressing all forms of exploitation of migrants by ruthless traffickers and smugglers as well as crooked employers**, while **entirely avoiding the criminalisation of migrants** which has devastating effects, because it arouses fears of migrants and contributes to turning them into scapegoats.

7. Countering the exclusion with the inclusion

We must overcome the idea that newcomers and local population are all competing for limited resources, whether they are jobs, services, housing, benefits or wealth. In our view, **both newcomers and local populations share the same interest in overcoming inequalities**. To achieve this goal, policies and **measures aimed at reducing inequalities for all and at increasing labour’s share of profits need to be introduced**.

8. Accommodating differences

Cohabitation between newcomers and locals is always challenging. Social standards differ, but the gradual change of individual rules and standards is occurring all the time.

With the exception of the practices that are utterly incompatible with the principles of liberal democracy, it is essential to assert that **changes cannot and must not be unilateral**. In fact, **differences need to be accommodated to the needs and shared rules and values of a pluralistic polity**. All activities that make room for different traditions must be supported by public authorities at all levels, making differences visible in the public sphere, thereby legitimising them and allowing people to become familiar with them, and by involving citizens in discussions and debates in appropriate public spaces.

9. Fostering the communities' resilience

A matching system between the needs of newcomers and those of the municipalities and civil societies that receive them should be established, with the goal of balancing measures between the two and **producing more equality and social justice for all**. Any such system requires national and international support, aimed at fostering **the communities' resilience**, which **is a necessary precondition for the implementation of a successful integration strategy**.

10. Promoting an idea of identity that is inclusive

The promotion of an idea of identity that is inclusive rather than exclusive (based on exclusive characteristics, such as ethnicity or religion) is a difficult process, but a highly worthwhile one. **Such an inclusive identity would be religion- and colour-blind**, made up by citizens who join a community of their own free will. The use of legislation to prohibit, prevent and condemn racism and xenophobia is a prerequisite for such a cultural transformation, which is not a “corruption of cultural values” that is to be feared but an “enrichment” of a culture that needs and can be welcomed.

FEPS *Global Migration Group*