

Status on the implementation of GCM – Danish contribution

Denmark signed the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), which is a non-legally binding framework with a view to strengthen international cooperation to improve migration management and reduce irregular migration at the global, regional and national levels. Migration is a global phenomenon and solving challenges related to migration requires international cooperation for which GCM offers a useful platform for dialogue.

At the national level, it is assessed that Denmark lives up to the 23 commitments put forward in GCM. Accordingly, Denmark has not prepared a national implementation plan for GCM, but Denmark is actively engaged in a number of areas in support of the implementation. Relevant Danish ministries are responsible for the various topics covered by GCM in close coordination and collaboration between key ministries such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (which is also responsible for development cooperation), the Ministry of Immigration and Integration, and the Ministry of Justice promoting a whole-of-government approach regarding the implementation of national migration policies.

As stated in the Danish explanation of vote during the General Assembly on 19 December 2018, GCM reaffirms the sovereign right of States to determine their national migration policies and their prerogative to govern migration within their jurisdiction in conformity with international law. Moreover, it allows countries to reserve certain rights and welfare benefits for regular migrants.

Denmark offers legal pathways for regular migration that reflects the Danish labor market as mentioned in Objective 5. Accordingly, Denmark offers a wide range of legal pathways for regular migration open for all third country nationals whom fulfil the set requirements. In this regard, it is important to note that Denmark does not operate with quotas on the number of persons that can make use of these legal pathways. However, Denmark would like to underline that decisions regarding which legal pathways to provide at any given time remain at the sole disposition of the State concerned.

Denmark also underlines the importance attached to the fact that media in Denmark enjoy extensive freedoms to debate all issues of importance to society, including the issue of migration in all its aspects.

Denmark has established cooperation with a number of relevant countries of origin for reciprocal return and readmission and reintegration arrangements with respect to both individual and procedural guarantees. The arrangements often include partnerships and financial support for capacity building as well as reintegration support to persons, who do not have the right to remain, voluntarily returning to their home country. Nevertheless, some countries of origin fail to comply with their obligation to cooperate on return and readmission of own nationals, particularly on forced returns in accordance with Objective 21. Lack of cooperation among States on return and readmission of rejected asylum seekers and irregular migrants to countries of origin remains a major obstacle to achieve safe, orderly and regular migration.

At the global and regional level, Denmark has contributed DKK 15 million to the Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) for 2020-2021 to support the establishment of the capacity-building mechanism underlined in GCM and the implementation of the GCM in developing countries and along migratory routes. This is also in support of the UN Network on Migration established by the Secretary-General. Denmark will enter MPTF's Steering Committee from August 2022.

Denmark has also provided annual core funding to IOM since 2018 to support IOM's new role in the UN architecture on migration, including strengthening its organizational effectiveness and in support of

capacity building for better migration management and addressing drivers of irregular migration at the global level.

The fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is highly relevant for achieving the objectives of GCM. In 2021, Denmark launched a new strategy for development cooperation “The World We Share”, where one of the main priorities is to address fragility, conflict, displacement and irregular migration. The strategy is guided by the SDG’s and based on a human rights approach as well as democratic values.

Denmark has in accordance with GCM objective 21 (Cooperate in facilitating safe and dignified return and readmission, as well as sustainable reintegration) fostered institutional contacts with relevant officials from countries of origin and destination by appointing an Ambassador for Irregular Migration, Return and Readmission with responsibility for supporting return and readmission along with a Special Envoy on Migration Issues as well as three regional migration counsellors strategically posted at Danish embassies in select regions. The goal is to maintain and improve bilateral relations, assist in specific readmissions, and identify opportunities for enhancing reintegration opportunities in countries of origin as well as funding capacity building efforts in support of countries of origin and transit towards improved migration management. Denmark has furthermore been a member of the European Return and Reintegration Network (ERRIN) since June 2016 via an associated partnership agreement. In countries without activities by ERRIN, Denmark has entered into agreement with the European Reintegration Support Organizations’ network to provide sustainable reintegration support via local partners.

In accordance with Objective 2, (Minimize the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their country of origin), Denmark is a major provider of international development assistance and humanitarian aid and one out of only five countries that fulfil the target of providing 0.7 pct. of GNI as development assistance. Denmark works with a human rights-based approach to development cooperation and has a strong focus on gender equality.

To better achieve Danish priorities regarding asylum and migration an Inter-ministerial Migration Task Force has been established to promote new solutions that can change the incentive structures behind present and future irregular migration flows, including the transfer of asylum seekers to a partner country outside the EU within Denmark’s international obligations and developing capacities in third countries along the migratory routes to secure better management of mixed/irregular migration movements. The activities of the Migration Task Force will i.e. contribute to the implementation of the Objectives 2, 4, 9, 10, 11 and 21.

It is of particular Danish priority to improve management of irregular migration, including strengthened border control, combatting human smuggling and trafficking, cooperation on return and readmission, addressing drivers of irregular migration, and enhancing international and regional cooperation on migration. Denmark contributes to IOM and UNODC efforts to combat human trafficking and smuggling of persons as part of the transnational response to smuggling of migrants and efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate trafficking in persons in line with Objectives 9 and 10. Moreover, Denmark has contributed to OHCHR projects on strengthening human rights fulfilment in migration management and border control in the Middle East and North Africa region and the promotion of a human rights based approach to climate related migration challenges in the Sahel in line with Objectives 7 and 11. Denmark is also actively supporting IOM in a number of countries in Africa, Asia and the Balkans with a focus on migration management and capacity building of migration authorities. Support is also being

provided to the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) in areas such as border management and migration data management.

Going forward Denmark would like to see a stronger focus on addressing irregular migration and border management in full respect of human rights, including developing the capacity of asylum and migration authorities in countries of origin and along migratory routes, and on supporting States in the implementation of Objective 21 on return and readmission. Denmark will continue to seek the effectiveness of return and readmission of third country nationals without legal stay through diplomatic consultations and bilateral cooperation. In order to ensure sustainable return and reintegration, Denmark will continuously establish and join reintegration programs through regional and bilateral arrangements with relevant NGOs, IGOs or other countries' authorities. Moreover, we would like to see a stronger focus on addressing the drivers of irregular migration, including the intersections between climate change, fragility and conflict and the link to irregular migration and forced displacement. In addition, ensuring close collaboration with other existing UN coordination mechanisms addressing migration-related issues to seek out synergies while avoiding duplication is a strong Danish priority. To this end, Denmark encourages other UN agencies with whom Denmark has strong collaboration to support the work of the UN Migration Network, notably via support to the Secretariat. Denmark will continue to work within the framework of GCM and support safe, orderly and regular migration.