Regional Review of the
Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
Member States of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

12-13 November 2020

Executive Summary

The Regional Review of implementation of the Global Compact for Safe Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) of Member States of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) was held virtually from 12-13 November 2020, with the participation of a range of stakeholders from across the UNECE region. The two-day intergovernmental meeting was preceded by a one-day multi-stakeholder consultation. Pursuant to GA RES 73/195, the purpose of the review was to assess progress made in advancing the Objectives of the GCM in the UNECE region, identify challenges and opportunities for improved, cooperative implementation, highlight good practices, and formulate key findings and recommendations to inform the 2022 International Migration Review Forum (IMRF). These findings and recommendations may also be considered in the 2021 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

Progress reported in advancing the GCM's Objectives at the national, regional and international levels attest to the need for closer cooperation in managing migration across the region and beyond, and acknowledgment that this will yield improved outcomes for migrants and society at all levels. As such, participants recognised the importance of harnessing the potential of human mobility - not only as a driver of economic development, but also in catalysing the immense promise of migrants in contributing knowledge, skills, experiences and perspectives that will enrich society more broadly.

Several themes emerged as significant points for reflection and discussion. The various and interconnected drivers of migration within and to the region were acknowledged to include conflict,[1] climate change, shifting demographic patterns and the pursuit of better economic opportunities. UNECE Member States' priorities reflect an ambition to enhance knowledge of and approaches to addressing migration drivers, which is evidenced by a recent initiative undertaken by Germany to convene a Commission on the "*Root Causes of Displacement*".

Ensuring protection and upholding the human rights of migrants is of particular concern to Member States and stakeholders alike. There was general agreement on the importance of improved asylum determination procedures,[2] as well as the identification of alternatives to immigration detention. Increasing investment in capacity building and the development of integrated border management strategies by a number of UNECE Member States were regarded as positive trends. The inclusion of migrant voices in policy development and the participation of civil society actors and other stakeholders in supporting and monitoring measures to adequately protect migrants and consistently uphold their human rights, were viewed as important approaches to ensuring improved and human rights-compliant outcomes for all migrants.

Combatting discrimination and promoting social cohesion were emphasised as increasingly explicit aims of Member States and stakeholders, and local and national authorities are taking innovative approaches to fostering migrant-friendly societies. At the national level, Canada's "*Immigration Matters*" communications campaign, Ireland's "*Global Migration Media Academy*", and Spain's "*National Observatory for Countering Xenophobia and Racism*", are elevating awareness and seeking to meet challenges head-on. At the municipal level, a number of cities are working to better promote migrant inclusion. In the United Kingdom, the "*#WeAreBristol*" communications campaign is an example of one such initiative that has demonstrated its importance to community solidarity and volunteerism within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Gallup's international Migrant Acceptance Index survey was cited as an evaluation resource by which governments and stakeholders can measure the impact and effectiveness of such efforts.

Member States stressed the need for more inclusive labour markets and the full participation of migrant workers in the formal economy as ensured through access to decent work and employment for which they are most qualified, in accordance with national labour market demands and skills supply. Increased investment in pre-departure skills training,

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[1] Noting that the GCM is only concerned with the regulation of migration and not with forced-displacement, which is covered by the Global Compact on Refugees, the discussions frequently recognized the links between migration frameworks and those governing asylum-seekers and refugees. It was recognised that many safeguards should also apply to asylum-seekers and refugees.

[2] Enhancing asylum procedures is covered by Global Compact on Refugees, although linked to general migration governance.

qualification recognition, and post-arrival programmes to facilitate integration were acknowledged to be critical to enable both labour market inclusion and broader social integration, empowering migrants, employers, and civil society to actively contribute to more inclusive and cohesive societies whilst addressing factors underlying discrimination and xenophobia. Member States, including Albania, Belgium, the Republic of Moldova and Serbia, offered strong examples of increasing efforts to expand recognition for skills and qualifications. Sweden's "*fast-track programme*"[3] facilitates adaption and entry into the labour market through cooperation with relevant actors to upskill and reduce legal barriers to self-employment within a range of trades and professions. The *Global Skills Partnership on Migration*[4] was noted as a valuable resource in supporting governments to overcome such challenges.

There was consensus that responses to the COVID-19 pandemic need to take into account migrant needs and that migrant contributions will be essential to recovery efforts. To this end, numerous examples were presented of efforts to provide migrants access to basic services regardless of status. Greece, Ireland, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Spain, the United Kingdom, and others, have demonstrated a commitment to upholding migrants' rights and protection in adopting measures to meet emerging challenges. The critical support of municipalities in addressing the consequences of the pandemic for migrants was demonstrated in the local initiatives undertaken by Bristol, Milan and Strasbourg, which prioritised equitable and needs-based service provision to migrants and their communities.

Across the UNECE region, significant progress has been witnessed in the implementation of the GCM; yet, participants to the Regional Review were unanimous in expressing a need for strengthened regional and global cooperation in advancing its Objectives and guiding principles. Indeed, whilst Member States have been able to demonstrate achievements within their own national contexts, across the region, and globally in cooperation with an expanding range of partners, it is clear that efforts must be sustained in order to achieve the aspirations of the GCM for the benefit of migrants and societies in countries of origin, transit and destination.

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[3] https://www.government.se/4a90b3/contentassets/e3606aadd3f248da81af73525110bf04/fact-sheet-fast-track---a-quicker-introduction-of-newly-arrived-immigrants; https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/content/esf-supports-swedens-fast-track-approach-migrant-integration
[4] https://eea.iom.int/sites/default/files/publication/document/Skills-Mobility-Partnerships-Infosheet.pdf; https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_653993.pdf

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Summary Report

1. Introduction

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) was adopted by United Nations Member States on 10 December 2018 and was endorsed by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) on 19 December 2018. It is the first inter-governmentally negotiated agreement to cover all dimensions of international migration in a holistic and comprehensive manner. Resting on the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and rooted in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other relevant frameworks, the GCM is a non-legally binding, cooperative framework that builds on the commitments agreed to by Member States in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, adopted in 2016.[5]

In resolution 73/195 ("GCM"), the General Assembly committed to conducting progress reviews at the local, national, regional and global levels in the framework of the United Nations through a State-led approach, intergovernmental in nature, and with the participation of all relevant stakeholders (para 48).

i.   Scope of Regional Review consultations

The Regional Review of implementation of the GCM within the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Region was held virtually, from 12-13 November 2020. The summary of the Regional Review is presented in accordance with paragraph 50 of UN General Assembly resolution 73/195, *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration*. The purpose of the summary report is to synthesise inputs received from Member States and stakeholders as contained within written submissions and emerging from the regional consultations. The resulting summary report is intended to inform the 2022 IMRF.

ii.   Regional Review preparatory process and organisation

The International Organization for Migration (IOM), in its capacity as Coordinator of the United Nations Network on Migration (the Network), with the support of UNECE, within its mandate and activities in the area of migration, and with the active participation of other members of the Network, led the preparation and organisation of the regional review.

As per its stated objectives, the Regional Review in the UNECE region sought to:
- Enable governments to undertake a first assessment of progress made, in line with the guiding principles laid down in resolution 73/195, and with the participation of relevant stakeholders;
- Serve as a forum in which challenges and opportunities will be highlighted, gaps identified, regional priorities discussed, and resource requirements identified;
- Provide a common platform for interaction among all relevant stakeholders, the exchange of lessons learned and best practices;
- Consider the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the governance of international migration;
- Facilitate the formulation of key findings and recommendations to inform the 2022 International Migration Review Forum.

To ensure an inclusive Regional Review, Member States were invited to submit voluntary inputs on experiences to date in the implementation of the GCM. Member States' submissions were solicited as a preparatory element in informing the Regional Review meeting and were posted on the regional landing page of the Network's website and the regional network

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[5] Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, para. 7

site as they became available. A format for voluntary reports was provided to Member States to guide their preparation. A total of 28 UNECE Member States and 17 stakeholders submitted reports to the Network.

In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Network opted to propose a virtual format for the Regional Review meeting. The meeting convened representatives of UNECE Member States; intergovernmental organisations; United Nations bodies, specialized agencies and funds; and relevant stakeholders from the UNECE region.[6] Interpretation was available throughout the entirety of the Regional Review consultations, enabling participants to follow discussions in English, French and Russian. The virtual format allowed for wide participation from across the region and beyond, with attendees located in over 30 countries, though predominantly within the UNECE region. The consultations were well-attended, with between 133 and 159 individuals participating each day.

The intergovernmental meeting consisted of an opening segment, followed by four thematic roundtables, which provided Member States and stakeholders the opportunity to highlight progress made in implementing the GCM and space for discussion. Subsequent to each roundtable, participants were given the floor for interventions, thereby ensuring an interactive process.

The roundtable discussions were aligned with thematic clusters envisioned within the IMRF modalities resolution, thus affording a thematically coherent exchange on achievements, challenges and opportunities relevant to the GCM's objectives across the region. The roundtables were organized as follows:

- *Roundtable 1: Objectives 14, 15, 16, 19, 20, 22*
- *Roundtable 2: Objectives 2, 5, 6, 12, 18*
- *Roundtable 3: Objectives 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 21*
- *Roundtable 4: Objectives 1, 3, 7, 17, 23*

Each roundtable was moderated by a Member State or a stakeholder, with due regard for geographic and gender balance and with a view to the whole-of-government and whole-of-society principles enshrined within the Global Compact. To frame the interactive discussion, the Network prepared a short background note in advance of each roundtable, which included guiding questions relevant for reflection on each GCM objective. All supporting documents were made publicly available on the Network's UNECE landing page.[7]

iii. *Informal multi-stakeholder consultation*

Prior to the inter-governmental consultations, the Network facilitated a series of informal briefings with stakeholders in the UNECE region to ensure their meaningful engagement in the review process. Further to briefing discussions, the Network organized a one-day multi-stakeholder consultation convening a range of partners from across the UNECE region on 9 November 2020. Stakeholders contributed to discussions aimed at assessing progress made in the implementation of the GCM in the UNECE region, identifying challenges and opportunities for meaningful engagement going forward, and formulating key findings and recommendations to inform the 2022 IMRF.[8]

The multi-stakeholder consultation consisted of an opening segment, followed by two thematic roundtables. Roundtables consisted of prepared interventions by panellists and interactive plenary discussions with participants. The first roundtable focused on progress witnessed and challenges perceived in the implementation of the GCM in the UNECE region, while the second roundtable considered best practices for stakeholder engagement in GCM implementation, follow-up and review. A Rapporteur was appointed to prepare a summary of the multi-stakeholder consultation, which was presented in

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[6] As per the objectives of the UN Network on Migration, drawn from the Executive Committee decision of 23 May 2018 and the GCM's Annex I, the Network will, inter alia, engage with external partners, including migrants, civil society, migrant and diaspora organizations, faith-based organizations, local authorities and communities, the private sector, employers' and workers' organizations, trade unions, parliamentarians, National Human Rights Institutions, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, academia, the media and other relevant stakeholders at global, regional and national levels.

[7] Background Papers, Summary Reports and other event documents are accessible here: https://migrationnetwork.un.org/country-regional-network/europe-north-america

[8] See link above.

the opening session of the first day of the inter-governmental meeting on 12 November 2020. The Rapporteur's summary report is available on the Network website.[9]

iv.   GCM Regional Review report

The purpose of this report is to synthesise inputs received from Member States and stakeholders in their voluntary reports submitted to the Network and as reflected in statements offered during the consultations. It aims to highlight issues and priorities of regional importance, propose pathways for enhanced regional collaboration and identify measures that may be taken by Member States across the region in advancing implementation of the GCM. As the culmination of the first UNECE regional consultation on the status of implementation of the GCM, it can serve as a baseline reference within relevant regional and global fora in the future, including the 2022 IMRF. Accordingly, following sections provide 1) presentation of good practices and lessons learned; and 2) a brief summary of conclusions; and 4) recommendations emerging from the regional consultation. A more detailed review of implementation of each of the 23 GCM Objectives is attached as an annex.

2. Selected good practices and lessons learned

The following section presents acknowledged good practices and lessons learned in regard to implementation of the GCM as offered by Member States and stakeholders within their voluntary reports and reflections throughout the consultations. The section is arranged according to lessons learned and good practices witnessed at the national, regional and global levels.

National level

Establishment of UN Migration Networks: A number of Member States have noted the existence of, or plans to, establish national-level UN Migration Networks, which have been witnessed to be valuable mechanisms for convening UN entities and stakeholders in ensuring effective and coordinated system-wide support to Member States in implementation, follow-up and review of the GCM. The establishment and actions of national-level UN Migration Networks in Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Moldova have supported the strengthening of country and regional-level UN migration coordination mechanisms, enabled more effective integration of migration-related issues in the design and implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCF) and supported the development of national implementation plans. Azerbaijan's "*National Strategy on Migration*" was developed with support of the UN Migration Network, which is likewise expected to be a critical mechanism to support effective implementation. Turkey is expecting to establish a national-level UN Migration Network with the cooperation of the UN Country Team and the Resident Coordinator's Office, which will complement and facilitate achievement of objectives of Turkey's "*UN Sustainable Development and Cooperation Framework*".

National policy mapping: Member States' voluntary reports offer some insight into the processes that have been led at various levels of government to 'translate' and map responsibility for GCM objectives to ministries, institutions and agencies. It is evident that such processes have not always been without their challenges. At the same time, these exercises have entailed more than assigning responsibility for delivery of GCM objectives within national contexts, but more fundamentally, have prompted or been carried out within broader reviews of national programmes and policies undertaken by Member States to develop more coherent and comprehensive strategies to implement the GCM. In Kazakhstan, a national review process is reported to have served in highlighting gaps in national legislation and in surfacing discussion related to ratification of international conventions aligned with Objectives of the GCM. Similarly, Portugal has identified a need to optimise the articulation between governmental areas and services involved in delivering its National Plan for implementation of the GCM, to boost the implementation of measures of greater complexity and/or involving several actors, and for streamlining the work of the network of focal points established for monitoring of the National Plan's delivery.

Institutional reform and reorganisation: A number of Member States have noted institutional reforms and reorganisation of agencies that promise to offer more coherence and synergies in delivering on the GCM's Objectives. These pertain to

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[9]https://migrationnetwork.un.org/sites/default/files/docs/gcm_unece_regional_review_multistakeholder_meeting_report_by_rapporteur__1.pdf

both domestic and internationally-oriented entities, and within their voluntary reports, Member States have offered reflection on how emerging institutional set-ups may facilitate better cooperation and collaboration, both vertically and horizontally, in implementing the GCM. Whilst there will be no one-size-fits-all approach to institutional organisation to enabling progress on the GCM's objectives, the manner in which States have approached the whole-of-government principle in the process of institutional restructuring promises to provide lessons learned in the future.

National Plans for GCM implementation: Whilst a number of Member States have indicated consideration for the elaboration of specific national plans for the implementation of the GCM, among Member States, only Portugal has confirmed the development of such a plan. Acknowledging challenges faced during its first year of implementation, conceptualisation and packaging the National Plan as a framework for action has enabled clear articulation of specific challenges within its delivery, and as such, evinces the inherent value of such an approach. Beyond this, Portugal suggests that the dynamic coordination and prioritisation of proximity and different levels of actors involved in the implementation of the National Plan has facilitated both faster and easier response to challenges and realisation of results for citizens and within integration processes.

Regional level

Exchanging good practices: Whilst Member States remain cognisant that practices must often be adapted to local and national particularities, there is significant appetite across the region to share and learn from the experiences of other Member States in advancing GCM implementation. As part of its champion role, Canada is aiming to share its best practices to support GCM implementation. For instance, one priority for Canadian engagement is addressing and reducing vulnerabilities in migration, particularly those experienced by women and girls. Projects such as the "*Gender Hub*" assist in this effort by providing concrete resources and guidance in support of gender-responsive migration policies. At the sub-regional level, Kazakhstan's efforts to establish a UN Interregional Centre for the SDGs for Central Asia promises to strengthen partnership on regional promotion of the SDGs through sharing of lessons learned, best practices and on-site coordination of measures towards implementation of the GCM's objectives. More broadly, it was noted that the GCM Regional Review itself represented an opportunity for exchange, enabling Member States to take stock of progress and identify areas where intensified engagement would enhance progress in national contexts and beyond. Similar fora should continue to place an emphasis on creating space for meaningful exchange amongst Member States and stakeholders.

Capacity-building: Tackling the challenges and seizing the opportunities of better managed migration within and beyond the UNECE region is acknowledged to require the concerted and cooperative efforts of Member States in partnership with a broader range of actors at the national, regional and global levels. To this end, capacity building has been highlighted as a critical element of Member States' national strategies, which reflect significant emphasis on developing capacity building mechanisms and partnerships at several levels. Both capacity building needs and strengths of respective countries have been highlighted. Azerbaijan's establishment of a Regional Training Center on Migration will enhance training and education in the field of migration in the region, and a focus on facilitating mutual recognition of professions is expected to contribute to improved outcomes for labour migrants and strengthening of regular pathways. Canada's capacity-building to support other states in achieving their GCM-related objectives and initiatives focusing on strengthening host and transit countries' border management practices have received particular interest from Member States, as has Canada's capacity building support in the area of safe and dignified return. Germany's support to the Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) and the associated capacity building mechanism are critical to enabling more balanced progress towards' countries achievement of the GCM's objectives within the region and beyond. In strengthening collaboration to promote capacity building across the region, it has been suggested that the UN Network on Migration could have a role to play in bringing together clusters of countries with relatively developed migration systems and similar approaches to migration and development for informal discussions.

Partnerships and solidarity: Expanding and deepening partnerships between and amongst Member States is an evident consequence of closer collaboration on migration issues of mutual concern, and acknowledgement of the impact of unprecedented migratory flows on certain Member States has prompted calls for greater solidarity in meeting challenges together. Strengthening of bilateral and multilateral cooperation in meeting challenges and leveraging opportunities is being borne out in several contexts, though equitable burden-sharing and sustained support to frontline states remain predominant concerns that continue to orient cooperation priorities. Continued partnership with countries of origin, transit and destination, and investment in developing policies and programmes that more equitably and effectively address challenges along the entirety of migration routes are recognized as essential approaches that will require strengthening and political commitment at the national, regional and international levels.

Cooperation with international organisations and the European Union: Within the Regional Review, the significant role of international organisations and specialised agencies in convening Member States for the purpose of building partnerships to identify common challenges and pursue cooperative solutions remains evident. Despite the relative strength of national institutions and resources available to design and implement domestic responses to migration challenges and opportunities, cooperation with members of the Network and its Coordinators (IOM, UNHCR and UNDP) at regional level, the OSCE, the European Union, and ICMPD, amongst others, is witnessed to be an important vehicle for fostering collaboration and localising initiatives and programmes at the national and regional levels. Activities of these agencies have enabled regular and broad-based dialogue, establishment of standards and good practices, provision of specialised thematic expertise, diffusion of tools and procedures, and more broadly, sustained momentum across the region in implementing the GCM.

Migration governance is highly influenced by the presence and priorities of the European Union, which has established comprehensive policies, procedures and mechanisms for EU Member States. European countries engaged in EU accession processes are revising strategies and legislative frameworks in order to harmonise these with EU standards and the *acquis communautaire*. As such, the importance of policies and legislation adopted at the regional level for all facets of migration governance cannot be overstated.

Global level

Champion countries: A group of Member States serve as "Champion countries" for the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration, receiving explicit support from the Network, whilst also generating key insights, lessons learned, and positive practices that can be shared in dedicated spaces and with other Member States. Canada and Portugal are two UNECE Member States that act as Champion countries.

Canada is actively leveraging its position as a champion country to promote balanced narratives on migration, gender-responsive migration policies, integration and cohesion, and international cooperation for returns and reintegration. Canada is further taking important steps in elaborating a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to the GCM's implementation. In seeking to advance the implementation of the GCM domestically, regionally and globally, Canada is demonstrating the importance of sharing approaches and experiences in order to exchange learning, foster engagement and leverage mechanisms for reflecting on ways to adapt and improve. To this end, emphasis on exchanging best practices, promoting and advancing the Compact's principles and objectives in international fora, and providing capacity building to support other states in achieving their GCM-related objectives, demonstrates the potential of Champion Countries as catalysts in accelerating more effective and cooperative implementation of the GCM.

Portugal was the first country in the world to establish a "*National Plan for the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration*". In line with the 23 objectives of the GCM, the 97 measures of the National Plan are based both on an integrated governance approach of migration policies and an intercultural model of diversity management. The "*Government Programme 2019-2023*" is already aligned with the objectives of the Compact and several initiatives have been developed in support of the National Plan. Portugal has continued to champion GCM principles and objectives throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. This is demonstrated by a number of measures enacted to ensure that all migrants and asylum seekers in the country with pending applications had their situation regarded as regular during this period. Portugal also ensured that migrants' documents remained valid until 30 October 2020, assuring that no foreign citizen lost social rights; COVID-19 testing and treatment was made free of charge for migrants whilst information in relevant languages and awareness raising was prioritized; procedures for the examination of applications for residence permits were simplified; mapping of the needs and vulnerabilities of migrants was undertaken; and outreach to children and young people in vulnerable situations during isolation was undertaken to ensure continued access to education.

International promotion of the GCM's principles and objectives: Within its efforts as a GCM Champion country, Canada's international promotion of the Compact's objectives and principles has included advancing work to shape the public narrative on migration by promoting balanced dialogue. To this end, Canada is deepening its engagement with others on migration narratives through its role as Co-Chair of the GFMD ad-hoc Working Group on Public Narratives on Migration. Within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, Canada is seeking to shift the narrative in a positive direction by showcasing how migration can help communities to "build back better".

Global partnerships: Amongst Member States and stakeholders, there was unanimous support for deepened and intensified international partnership, within the region and beyond, in seeking sustainable implementation of the GCM. The message from participants was clear: no state can manage migration in isolation, and the chain is only as strong as its weakest link. New and innovative partnerships are developing, and new actors are being engaged in supporting implementation of the GCM across the globe. Beyond the clear benefits afforded to migrants and their communities, as well as Member States and societies brought about by more cooperative action in pursuing the aims of the GCM, there was a sentiment that the dialogue, collaboration and exchange of learning enabled by the GCM as a platform had the potential to foster and sustain more positive engagement between and among States into the future.

360° approach/ whole-of-route / Humanitarian-development-peace Nexus Approaches: A number of Member States have elaborated on their visions for addressing migration challenges and opportunities across national, regional and international dimensions, and to this end, propose approaches that build upon the GCM's whole-of-government and whole-of-society principles to incorporate a more explicit international and humanitarian orientation. Spain, Sweden and Turkey noted their 360° approaches to migration, which embody the core of the vision, principles and objectives of the GCM and aim at maximising the overall benefits of migration whilst addressing challenges in countries of origin, transit and destination. The United Kingdom's "whole of route approach" seeks to address humanitarian concerns facing migrants across the world as well as harnessing the benefits of regular migration for both host and origin countries. Germany reiterated its commitment to supporting better coherence of humanitarian assistance, stabilisation, development cooperation and peacebuilding efforts, i.e. the HDP nexus, and notes that increased flexible, multi-year and adaptive funding facilitates designing joined-up nexus interventions that can strengthen resilience in the context of displacement.

3. Conclusions

The Regional Review of the implementation of the GCM for UNECE Member States represented a unique and timely opportunity to convene government representatives and a range of stakeholders from across the region in dialogue on the achievements, challenges and opportunities witnessed to date in implementing the GCM. Against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Regional Review benefitted from new perspectives and fresh insight from both Member States and stakeholders as regards measures that may be taken to promote the effective implementation of the GCM's 23 Objectives. In this regard, the Regional Review's format of roundtable consultations afforded participants a collaborative forum for discussion and debate, enabling the presentation of country-specific as well as broader regional-level issues that require cooperative approaches.

The submission of voluntary reports by both Member States and stakeholders prior to the regional review served to provide valuable content for discussions and context for the numerous challenges and opportunities that were highlighted during the consultations. Whilst Member States have been able to demonstrate significant progress in delivering against the Objectives of the GCM within their own national contexts, across the region, and globally in cooperation with an expanding range of partners, it is clear that efforts must be sustained in order to achieve the aspirations of the GCM for the benefit of migrants and societies in countries of origin, transit and destination. Promising developments at all levels were highlighted in the course of the regional review, and the value of the GCM in convening interlocutors under a common framework for action was evident in the broad participation and well-prepared contributions of Member States and stakeholders.

Beyond affording an opportunity to review the status of each of the GCM's Objectives in the UNECE region, the Regional Review enabled the identification of a number of good practices and lessons learned visible at the national, regional and global levels that promise to catalyse closer cooperation and improved outcomes for migrants and Member States.

4. Recommendations

The following recommendations emerged within roundtable discussions and reflect contributions of stakeholders and Member States within their voluntary reports and interventions throughout the Regional Review consultations; they were formulated following conclusion of the event:

GCM in general

- Advocate for all countries in the UNECE region to join the GCM.
- Encourage countries in the region to become Champions of the GCM.
- Encourage contributions to the Migration MPTF. Participation in support of the Peer-to-Peer learning through the Migration Network Hub (formerly Global Knowledge and Connection Hubs)
- Promote a 360-vision of the GCM for a comprehensive approach to optimise the overall benefits of migration, whilst addressing risks and challenges for individuals and communities in countries of origin, transit and destination.
- Leverage the positive contributions of migrants to respond and build back better from the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes investing in knowledge and skills transfer, social and civic engagement, and cultural exchange between countries of origin, transit and destination.

Roundtable 1: Objectives 14, 15, 16, 19, 20, 22

- Member States are urged to continue to undertake measures to ensure reception systems take a human rights-based approach in affording migrants' access to essential services. This includes health (including sexual and reproductive healthcare), education, the labour market and social participation, as well as privacy and psychological and legal support, in accordance with relevant standards, and with a focus on the most vulnerable, including unaccompanied children, older persons, pregnant women, and persons with disabilities. To this end, Member States are encouraged to draw on recent experiences from within the UNECE region in establishing firewalls between service provision and immigration enforcement.
- Member States are encouraged to continue efforts, in cooperation with relevant civil society actors from across the region, to pursue measures aimed at fostering social inclusion and cohesion for a wider range of migrants. To this end, Member States are urged to maintain a focus on the importance of migrants' access to services, including social protection, and to draw on good practices witnessed across the UNECE region in promoting inclusion of vulnerable migrant groups such as disadvantaged youth, including LGBTQI+ and younger adolescents.
- In leveraging migrants' contributions to sustainable development in countries of origin and destination, and in order to strengthen policy coherence and effectiveness of development cooperation, Member States are encouraged to continue efforts to integrate migration into development planning and sectoral policies at the local, national, regional and global levels, engaging with a wider range of partners, including diaspora communities.
- Mindful of challenges encountered during the COVID-19 pandemic in sustaining and fostering financial inclusion of migrants, Member States are encouraged to consider implementation of the recommendations contained in the "*Blueprint for Action - Remittances in Crisis: Response, Resilience, Recovery*" within their efforts to achieve remittance costs at or below the target of 3% - as also called for in the GCM - and to promote remittance transfers that contribute to training, education, development in communities of origin.
- Member States are encouraged to continue to pursue cooperation with other States, and closer engagement with trade unions, to enable the portability of entitlements and social protection within and across regions, ensuring migrants' access to justice and social protection schemes for migrant workers.

Roundtable 2: Objectives 2, 5, 6, 12, 18

- Member States are encouraged to leverage existing and new partnerships to better link the GCM with the Global Compact on Refugees and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, integrating the humanitarian, development and peace nexus into migration and development policies and investing in research on the climatic and environmental drivers of migration to inform evidence-based migration management policies and protection mechanisms.
- Drawing on experiences in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, Member States are encouraged to continue to enhance the availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration, including consideration for regularisation and suspension of deportations in order to ensure migrants' protection and continued access to essential services during the pandemic.
- Member States are urged to continue efforts to ensure adherence to the ILO core labour standards as articulated in the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, and to ensure freedom from discrimination and protection of fundamental rights of all migrant workers in accordance with international human rights laws and standards. To

this end, Member States are encouraged to take measures to ensure occupational safety protections and access to justice for violations of migrant workers' rights, including through upholding migrants' freedom of association and freedom to join and form trade unions.

- In strengthening certainty and predictability in migration procedures for appropriate screening, assessment and referral, Member States are urged to ensure that all migrants are afforded access to individual assessment, and that anyone claiming to be a child is treated as such unless otherwise determined through a multi-disciplinary, independent and child-sensitive age assessment.
- Member States are encouraged to continue to develop cooperation, approaches and mechanisms within and beyond the region to support migrants in matching skills and job opportunities, facilitating access to documentation which can affect recognition of qualifications, creating adequate training and job opportunities and language classes to facilitate integration and administrative procedures, with a particular focus on youth.

Roundtable 3: Objectives 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 21

- In implementing policies and procedures at borders, Member States are encouraged to build on achievements in developing integrated border management strategies and increase investment in training of relevant authorities to support regular facilitation of cross-border movement of persons and goods. Such trainings might encompass legal frameworks, identification of victims and co-operation between relevant actors.
- Member States are urged to ensure that screening procedures at borders adequately account for the needs, rights and specific circumstances of individuals that may be in a vulnerable situation, including stateless persons and children, based on human rights or humanitarian grounds, including protection of family and life and unity, the best interest of the child and the principle of non-refoulement.
- Member States are urged to ensure consistent and unfettered access of human rights actors for the purpose of independent monitoring of human rights violations at land and maritime borders, enabling timely and effective investigation and sanctioning of violations of t relevant international human rights and refugee law standards.
- Member States are encouraged to resume State-run search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean and to ensure the legitimate humanitarian activities of civil rescue ships can be carried out without undue restriction.
- Member States are urged to continue strengthening partnerships and mechanisms for monitoring and combatting of smuggling and ensuring victims' access to protection and assistance. To this end, EU Member States are encouraged to take steps towards implementing the Council of Europe's European Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC) "*Action Plan on Fostering International Cooperation and Investigative Strategies in Fighting the Smuggling of Migrants*".
- Member States are urged to continue efforts across relevant public institutions, and in cooperation with a wider range of partners, to strengthen protection for victims of trafficking, including through resourcing identification and support services – including provision of legal stay, whilst ensuring effective access to justice for migrants without fear of loss of freedom, deportation or punishment.
- Member States are urged to ensure respect for regional and international human rights law and standards in relation to immigration detention, in accordance with established principles such as legitimacy, necessity and proportionality, and with assured judicial oversight. Immigration detention should only be considered as a measure of last resort, and children should never be subjected to detention. To this end, Member States are encouraged to continue to strengthen engagement with national human rights institutes, and to collect and share data on alternatives to immigration detention, including non-custodial alternatives to detention, in order to improve evaluation of the results and accountability.
- Member States are urged to continue to ensure that the principles of safe, dignified and sustainable return and readmission are upheld, and that due process and individual assessment continue be carried out. To this end, Member States are urged to ensure prohibition of return in cases where there is a real and foreseeable risk of death, torture, inhumane and degrading treatment, punishment or other irreparable harm in line with international human rights law, and to continue efforts to build effective cooperation with States to which migrants are to be returned in order to ensure sustainable reintegration. In considering good practices witnessed during the COVID-19 pandemic, consideration for suspension of forced returns should be given in ensuring the protection and health of migrants.

Roundtable 4: Objectives 1, 3, 7, 17, 23

- Member States and stakeholders are encouraged to build on ongoing efforts across the UNECE region for the development of digital tools and platforms to enhance collection and utilisation of disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies, including migration forecasting, and to this end, to continue to build capacity and strengthen intergovernmental collaboration and cooperation across borders and with relevant stakeholders.
- Member States are urged to ensure that policies and procedures at borders adequately account for migrants' right to information and that mechanisms are in place to enable accurate and timely information provision, including through the contributions of civil society actors.
- Member States are urged to ensure full implementation of best interests of the child safeguards and encouraged to enable access to and use of family reunification as a key regular pathway for children and families in migration.
- Member States are encouraged to build on efforts to collect and utilize data in informing evidence-based public discourse in shaping perceptions of migration, and to empower and engage local community leaders to prevent, denounce and act against incidences of intolerance, racism, xenophobia and other forms of discrimination against migrants and diasporas.
- Member States and stakeholders are encouraged to continue to promote and leverage the mutually reinforcing aims of the Global Compact and existing international legal and policy frameworks, particularly the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, in advancing policies and programmes that integrate migration within sustainable development.

Annex

Review of implementation of GCM Objectives across the UNECE Region

The following section offers an overview of implementation of the GCM's 23 Objectives across the UNECE region, based on the voluntary reports submitted by Member States and stakeholders prior to the Regional Review consultations, as well as statements made during the roundtable discussions of the multi-stakeholder consultation and the intergovernmental review. Intended only as a summary, this review does not reflect a full account of input provided by Member States or stakeholders within their individual contributions, but aims to offer a balanced snapshot from across the UNECE region. Full voluntary reports from Member States and contributions from stakeholders are listed in Annex 2 to this report and can be sourced from the Network website.

Objective 1: Collect and utilize accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies

The importance of migration data to policymaking across many socioeconomic areas and Objectives of the GCM was highlighted during discussions, including in regard to human rights monitoring, development of integration policies, diaspora engagement, and economic planning. As such, the importance of a whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach at the national level, and deepened cooperation and collaboration at the regional and international levels, were emphasised. Participants expressed concern that the collection of reliable migration data has been challenged by measures enacted during the COVID-19 pandemic, and emphasised that individual and cooperative efforts must continue apace.

To this end, Member States are taking measures to better integrate migration data collection and utilisation within their national policies, whilst intensifying cooperation with countries within the region and globally to share good practices, offer lessons learned, build capacity, and together meet challenges and opportunities in improving migration governance and policy development.

Albania, in collaboration with countries of the region and international partners, has established the "Regional Platform for Exchanges of Personal Data on Migration" (WB-MIDEX), developed by the Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI), and supported by the EU Programme "Regional Support for Migration Management with focus on Protection of Western Balkans and Turkey". WB-MIDEX will enable the exchange and production of Eurostat-harmonized statistical data through common forms and methodologies. Albania is also collaborating with countries in the region to exchange statistics on migrant smuggling in the Western Balkans. The country recently completed its most comprehensive ever Household Migration Survey, in which it collected data from more than 20,000 households and 70,000 respondents.

Germany has made significant investments in supporting better migration data collection and utilisation within its policies, including an initiative to improve integration monitoring and policies. Germany is collecting and analysing data with regard to integration in order to map the heterogeneity of the population by migrant origin. The data provide insight into successes and failures in the integration process and enable policymakers to derive indications of where integration measures need to be intensified in the future. An academic research centre has been established at the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees to enhance analysis, with a view to enabling improved migration management. Germany financially supports IOM's Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC), which aggregates decentralised data from various institutions into a structured and user-friendly database for more evidence-based migration management. Under Germany's Presidency of the Council of the European Union, a dialogue on the digital transformation of migration management was launched in July 2020 with an initiative entitled "Migration 4.0". This initiative deals with the challenges and opportunities which digital transformation brings to migration management. This includes opportunities associated with AI / machine learning applications for forecasting migration flows, early-warning systems, new communication channels and media (social media, virtual counselling, virtual diaspora) and digital migration management tools (facial and voice recognition, blockchain technology). A key interest is to improve migration through digitalisation. It is important to Germany to maintain and further develop the substantive exchange between the EU Council member states on operational digitalisation.

Portugal's Migration Observatory is producing annual reports on integration of migrants based on statistical data obtained through a network of focal points and various public services. The Migration Observatory plans to expand data collection through its network so as to achieve a holistic view on the integration path of migrants in the country, and with the aim of informing social discourse and policymaking, is issuing reports on entry of foreign citizens, the Portuguese diaspora, human

trafficking, international protection and ethnic-racial discrimination. Collection of data and reporting on the economic contribution of migrants to Portugal's social security system promises to offer clear evidence of the benefits of migrants to host countries.

In support of the Agenda 2030 and Objective 1 of the GCM, Sweden is funding a regional programme to improve migration statistics in Africa. The programme is coordinated by Statistics Sweden in collaboration with IOM and the African Union statistical institute StatAfric. The project aims to increase capacity to describe intracontinental migration within regional economic communities (RECs), to harmonize concepts and methods, strengthen the availability and awareness of gender-sensitive migration data and coordinate migration statistics. It is expected to support RECs in identifying regional indicators that can shed light on the contribution of migration to economic growth, integration and development within the different regions.

The United Kingdom's "Safety, Support and Solutions Phase 2 programme" (SSSII) funds the development of high-quality data and evidence on migration trends and challenges to ensure governments and humanitarian actors have accurate information about the risks to people on the move. The programme has demonstrated the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on migrants along the Central Mediterranean Route (CMR) in North and West Africa, with evidence suggesting that whilst movement restrictions, border closures and stranded migrants characterised the start of 2020, some migrants continue to travel along the CMR. Recent studies from the Independent Monitoring, Rapid Research and Evidence Facility (IMREF) of the SSSII programme show that the COVID-19 pandemic has led to an unprecedented economic crisis, entailing increased unemployment rates and negative effects on remittances that are likely to shape the migration landscape for the duration of the pandemic and beyond. The programme supports innovative data collection methods such as the Mixed Migration Centre's "Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative" (4mi) and IOM's "Displacement Tracking Matrix".

Objective 2: Minimize the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their country of origin

UNECE Member States ascribe significant importance to the GCM's Objective 2, and accordingly, many report committing considerable resources to mitigating the range of drivers and structural factors that continue to compel people to leave their countries. Globally, several UNECE Member States figure amongst the largest contributors to international development assistance and humanitarian aid. In promoting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs in cooperation with countries of origin, Member States highlighted bi- and multilateral efforts to expand programmes and develop new initiatives aimed at promoting goals outlined in GCM Objective 2b. Programmes have been designed to strengthen resilience of communities and to create opportunities for youth in communities experiencing elevated levels of outward migration, including implementation of the "EU Social Protection Systems Program" (EU-SPS), which aims to support the construction of social security systems in African and Asian countries. Circular migration schemes were offered as examples of good practices in facilitating transfer of knowledge that would result in improved economic and social conditions in both sending and receiving countries. Despite continued investment in development assistance and humanitarian aid, indicators for official development assistance (ODA) and official development assistance to least developed countries were acknowledged to be developing unfavourably in a number of UNECE Member States, with only a handful confirming national contributions amounting to the standard UN target of 0,7% required to achieve the SDGs.

Amongst the many drivers that compel people to leave their countries, Member States and stakeholders acknowledged the increasing significance of climate change as a direct and indirect influence. Reflections of some substantiated the view that unmitigated climate change and continuing environmental degradation acted as threat multipliers, increasing the probability of violent conflict arising from complex interaction between geopolitical, economic, religious, and ethnic factors. It was suggested that an imbalanced focus on exacerbation of such factors in contributing to migration movements obscured more urgent action to address the consequences of climate change as a primary driver underlying others. An initiative undertaken by Germany to convene a Commission on the "Root Causes of Displacement" promises to deliver fresh insight into the interplay of the diverse drivers of displacement that compel migration within and to many countries across the UNECE region, and in turn, inform new approaches, partnerships and actions.

Several Member States stressed the importance of promoting economic development and job creation within strategies to reduce outward migration. Albania's new "National Strategy for Employment and Skills" and its related Plan of Action seek to address outward migration resulting in brain drain whilst enhancing domestic labour markets. Kazakhstan's focus

on promotion of entrepreneurship and stimulating internal migration acknowledges the importance of equitable national economic development across regions and the need to create conditions that offer alternatives to migration.

Member States and stakeholders emphasised the likely enduring socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting implications for migration dynamics within and to the UNECE region, noting that communities in countries of origin were suffering from reduced remittance flows. Proposed responses from stakeholders included debt cancellation as a potential mitigation measure in easing strain on national and local economies.

Consensus emerged around the need for redoubled commitment to multilateralism, the pursuit of coherent policies aligned with the 2030 Agenda, and action towards effective implementation of the Paris Agreement. This was viewed as a strong signal from participants for the importance of embedding sustainability within strategies to combat poverty and create better living conditions for people and communities facing the prospect of migration.

Objective 3: Provide accurate and timely information at all stages of migration

As was echoed by many participants, migrants increasingly need access to accurate and timely information. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, its impact on the populations and economies of different countries, and the resulting policies and measures taken in attempting to mitigate its spread, have resulted in increased insecurity for migrants who have had to navigate additional challenges in remaining informed of their rights and obligations, and eventual consequences of their choices. These relate not only to considerations for their own health and that of their families, but extend to livelihoods and other motivations and considerations that have given rise to decisions to migrate. Whilst the pandemic has given new urgency and underscored the importance of ensuring migrants are afforded timely and accurate information during all stages of migration, UNECE Member States have provided evidence of expanding efforts to meeting the identified information needs of migrants.

UNECE Member States report several approaches and modalities for ensuring that migrants can obtain relevant information via various channels. Amongst those Member States offering an update on this Objective, almost all confirmed that relevant information was available via consulates abroad, and many indicated the existence of specific websites where migrants could obtain information about residence permits, work permits, rights and obligations and legal regulations. Several countries report having incorporated specific information within their websites relevant to individuals seeking international protection, such as Belgium, which operates a Help Desk via its website. To varying degrees, Member States report providing this information in different languages. In addition to websites, several countries have launched apps for mobile phones where migrants can access a similar range of information. Azerbaijan has launched the "MigAz" mobile application with information tailored to migrants coming to the country, whilst Belgium and other UNECE Member States have contributed to the development of IOM's "MigApp", which offers a range of information to potential migrants on safe migration, low-cost money transfers, migration risks, health guidelines, etc. Whilst use of digital communication tools is widespread and recognised to be effective and efficient for migrants in many contexts, it was acknowledged in the consultations that a 'digital inclusion gap' may result in some migrants lacking access to relevant, timely and accurate information.

Several countries, including Armenia, North Macedonia and Serbia, have established Migration Resource Centres (MRCs) to increase effectiveness and reach in providing awareness raising and accurate and information to migrants on regular migration channels. In order to inform potential migrants to Germany, the Government of Albania has signed an agreement with the German Government for cooperation in providing migration-related information via regional employment offices. In order to provide information about the risks of irregular migration and options for regular pathways, Turkey and Malta report distributing information brochures to migrants in a variety of languages.

Objective 4: Ensure that all migrants have proof of legal identity and adequate documentation

UNECE Member States acknowledged that migrants may be precluded access to essential services, employment, housing, and banking owing to a lack of legal identity and adequate documentation. Generally, UNECE Member States confirm meeting obligations towards their own citizens as laid out within GCM Objective 4, and several noted standardised procedures for ensuring migrants can obtain adequate documentation from national authorities. A number of countries, including the United Kingdom and Albania, confirmed that legally residing foreigners are issued with biometric identification documents, whilst the Portuguese government is providing all migrants with social security numbers, regardless of status, allowing them to access essential social support and strongly facilitating their regularisation processes.

In order to facilitate issuance of documentation and ensure more can obtain a regular status, Portugal has launched an initiative to offer immigration services to individuals in rural areas, with a specific focus on reaching vulnerable individuals and those with mobility challenges. A number of countries highlighted initiatives to digitalise immigration documents in order to deal with loss, damage, falsification, and to ensure ease of accessibility in using online and digital services. The existence of well-functioning civil registry systems was confirmed by most Member States reporting on Objective 4, and some countries, such as Belgium, reported efforts to support the establishment or enhancement of civil registry systems in countries of origin or transit. Within the roundtable discussions, participants were reminded by representatives from France of the direct link between promoting regular pathways, legal identity and documentation, and the need to maintain a focus on reliable documentation to counter fraud and the irregular migration it facilitates.

The majority of contributions from Member States and stakeholders that addressed Objective 4 focused on statelessness and regulations to address it within their respective territories. Azerbaijan has taken concrete steps towards naturalisation of stateless persons, and to this end, has conducted country-wide public awareness campaigns and issued on-spot documentation through mobile services to detect and engage stateless persons in naturalisation processes. Kazakhstan has undertaken efforts to ensure that migrants have proof of legal identity and adequate documentation, and in 2019, issued civil registry documentation to 759 individuals. 127 persons obtained a certificate of statelessness. Spain and Malta confirmed ratification of the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons. The Russian Federation confirmed the existence of provisions in its legal framework aimed at the reduction of statelessness, including a principle of conferring Russian citizenship. Federal laws were confirmed to contain a number of provisions simplifying the procedure of acquisition of Russian citizenship by stateless persons. Croatia noted a similar provision for acquisition of citizenship of children born to parents who are stateless or whose citizenship is unknown.

The Council of Europe's "Action Plan on Protecting Refugee and Migrant Children" includes an action aiming at ensuring that every child has the right to acquire a nationality. The European Committee on Legal Co-operation (CDCJ) has resolved to carry out a preliminary review of protocols and procedures used by member states to determine and resolve cases of statelessness, including those of migrant children.

Objective 5: Enhance availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration

Against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, societies became aware of the incalculable contributions of migrant workers in performing critical tasks that keep societies running and economies afloat. Amongst many examples, Member States and stakeholders acknowledged the contribution of migrant health workers in sustaining host countries' national health systems and in enabling continuity of essential services throughout the global pandemic. They referenced migrants' unacknowledged contributions to society and the positive force that migration represents. Accordingly, many participants shared their perspectives on the need to continue to ensure and enhance the availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration. More visible convergence of the shared interests and common ground amongst governments, employers, host societies and migrant communities was referenced by many.

Several Member States noted progress made in further developing Bilateral Labour Migration Agreements (BLMAs) and the utility of these in ensuring regular admission, effective work visa policies, social protection, skills portability and matching to respond to national labour market needs. Serbia has signed a number of new BLMAs with other Member States; Germany noted expansion of its BLMA with the Philippines to enable regular pathways for nurses; Spain highlighted legislation reform and cooperation with Morocco on circular migration programmes and skills matching; and Uzbekistan provided updates on new laws to regulate private employment agencies and initiatives to support creation of job training centres focusing on developing migrants' skills in accordance with labour market needs in other Member States. Participants stressed that BLMAs should be based on social dialogue. ILO and IOM are leading a multi-stakeholder Thematic Working Group under the UN Network on Migration that is currently developing practical guidance to support member States in negotiating, designing, implementing, and monitoring and evaluating rights-based, gender-responsive BLMAs. It was emphasized that whilst skills shortages and gaps remain the primary motivations in pursuing such agreements, the absence of coherent and deliberate skills matching continued to undermine successful implementation.

The United Kingdom provided details on its new points-based immigration system, which will treat all migrants equally based on skill level irrespective of their country of origin. The new migration policy is expected to provide significantly greater flexibility for skilled workers wishing to immigrate, whilst the plan to suspend the cap on the number of skilled workers, and provisions to lower the requisite salary thresholds and skills levels, are expected to provide employers with greater scope to employ skilled migrants from overseas. The Republic of Moldova reported having initiated labour market

liberalisation for certain sectors and simplified admission documentation procedures for those who want to work or invest in the country. Belgium introduced new policies in 2019 to enable third-country nationals (outside EU/EEA and Switzerland) wishing to stay in Belgium for more than 90 days to apply for a 'single permit' which contains both an authorisation to reside and an authorisation to work across the whole country. This single permit procedure was opened to highly skilled labour, seasonal workers and several medium-skilled professionals for which there is a structural shortage and need. With support from the EU, the Italian cities of Milan and Turin reported sustained efforts in promoting regular migration paths through co-development projects in cooperation with cities in Tunisia, which will improve the effectiveness of transnational trainings, labour exchanges and employment opportunities for young people. As evidenced by a study in the United Kingdom, Portugal and Germany undertaken by the United Nations Major Group on Children and Youth, migrant youth were highlighted as a demographic of particular importance when considering the development of skills matching, training and job placement initiatives.

Several Member States and stakeholders pointed to continuing challenges in facilitating regular labour migration pathways for low-skilled workers. Whilst new regional-level initiatives were acknowledged to include important provisions focusing on more systematic matching of labour market needs with dedicated training programmes, a number of stakeholders suggested there was an imbalance towards security approaches and a focus on return whereby labour migration opportunities were offered as an incentive for countries that cooperate on return and readmission.

Family reunification was a prominent theme for several Member States and stakeholders. Administrative barriers such as complicated and costly procedures to prove a family relation (e.g. required DNA testing), as well as high income requirements and short deadlines. For low-skilled migrants with temporary residence, significant barriers were noted in some UNECE Member States which required migrants guarantee financial resources to cover living costs and even sometimes language skills. It was noted that restrictions on family reunification for migrants of different skill levels undermined integration efforts, and that policies needed to be considered more broadly.

The COVID-19 pandemic has prompted a number of UNECE Member States to consider regularisation as a policy measure. Italy, the Republic of Moldova and Portugal reported having instituted regularisation in response to the pandemic, whilst Kazakhstan regularised some 170,000 migrants and waived requirements for visas for migrants stranded in the country. The Russian Federation confirmed its intention to increase regular pathways, including plans to revise regularisation rules and simplify migration channels and procedures. Within the Multi-stakeholder consultation, the Organization for Co-operation and Security in Europe (OSCE) noted plans to undertake research on regularisation as a policy measure within the UNECE region and beyond.

Objective 6: Facilitate fair and ethical recruitment and safeguard conditions that ensure decent work

UNECE Member States and stakeholders acknowledged the importance of maintaining a focus on facilitating fair and ethical recruitment and safeguarding conditions to ensure decent work for migrant workers s. Across the region, migrant workers are disproportionately concentrated in sectors and employment arrangements that are often temporary, informal or unprotected, exposing them to increased risk whilst often depriving them of recourse to channels to seek remedy for abuse. Input from trade unions and civil society organisations in the Central Asia region suggest that the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed structural and institutional flaws in the way migration is governed in the region. They pointed to policies designed for control rather than protection of migrant workers, and a lack of coordination between governments. Several participants offered reflections on how the COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the vulnerabilities migrants face, particularly when engaged informally or with an irregular status.

As is the case globally, women migrant workers across the UNECE region were acknowledged to be particularly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, including trafficking, though promising joint collaborations such as initiatives by the European World Employers Confederation and UNI-Europe provided good examples for Member States struggling with this issue, and successful projects in Kyrgyzstan and Turkey were highlighted. Within their voluntary reports, a number of Member States highlighted the relevant international conventions applied in ensuring ethical recruitment and decent labour conditions for migrants; however, reports of persisting discrimination, sub-standard working conditions, inadequate occupational safety protections, strict limitations on migrants' abilities to join labour unions and continuing impunity for violations of migrant workers' rights point to gaps in implementation of core provisions of ILO conventions. There was acknowledgment by participants that more needs to be done to ensure enforcement of relevant legislation and that migrants' voices must be heard whilst measures are enacted to ensure migrants' agency.

Canada's introduction of a new open work permit for temporary foreign workers (TFWs) experiencing, or at risk of, job-related abuse emerged as a good practice. The open work permit provides workers with a means to leave an abusive employment situation and seek alternative employment through a streamlined process without jeopardising their authorisation to work in the country. Germany's policy of conditioning recruitment of health workers on an assessment of potential stress to the country of origin's healthcare system was a strong example of ethical recruitment practices. Continued and deepened collaboration with specialised agencies by UNECE Member States, including through financial support for strengthened implementation of the GCM's Objective 6, is a promising signal of commitment to achieving its goals. Sweden's funding of IOM for the establishment and launch of the "Global Policy Network on Ethical Recruitment" will continue to enable development of relevant tools and channels for pursuing effective implementation of this important objective.

Stakeholders were critical of perceived omissions within regional approaches to facilitating fair and ethical recruitment and guaranteeing decent work within the EU. It was emphasized that regional frameworks for sanctioning employers of undocumented workers needed to enhance a focus on ensuring decent work, access to effective reporting and complaint and redress mechanisms, without exacerbating vulnerabilities by entailing risks of immigration enforcement.

Objective 7: Address and reduce vulnerabilities in migration

Across the UNECE region, there are several examples of good practices and innovative approaches being adopted by Member States in attempting to address and reduce the vulnerabilities faced by migrants. Significant challenges were noted in ensuring migrants are consistently protected and their human rights are upheld. Within discussions, participants were reminded of the mutual dependence of many of the GCM's objectives, and many reports emphasised the relevance of Objectives 1, 6, 15, and 17 in addressing and reducing vulnerabilities in migration. There was acknowledgment of the various factors that may contribute to rendering migrants vulnerable, including age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, legal status, engagement in employment, etc.; but as a corollary to this, participants noted the specific rights of individuals arising from such characteristics, and the corresponding legal obligations of States in ensuring their protection.

The importance of international labour conventions was emphasised, and several participants suggested these should apply to migrant workers regardless of their status. Ensuring the voice of migrant workers is represented in the labour movement, extending a right to freedom of association, ensuring access to justice and upholding basic standards for occupational safety and free and fair working conditions were highlighted as particularly relevant to reducing the vulnerabilities of migrant workers and affording them greater protection from exploitation and abuse.

Addressing the vulnerabilities of migrant women and children was a predominant theme, and whilst there is evidence of achievements and good initiatives in this regard, it was acknowledged that more needed to be done to ensure that the specific vulnerabilities of these categories, as well as other vulnerable migrant groups such as disadvantaged youth, including LGBTQ2+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, 2-spirit and other identities) and younger adolescents, are reflected in the policies and measures adopted to assess and respond to particular needs. Ensuring the incorporation of gender-sensitive policies and measures, the establishment of national child protection systems and the implementation of procedures that provide for assessments in the best interest of the child were highlighted as determinant to reducing vulnerabilities. In considering vulnerabilities, the need to continue to address xenophobia and discrimination, whilst building bridges between migrant communities and local populations, was likewise a common theme noted by participants.

As was evident from participants' reflections on many of the GCM Objectives, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted persisting gaps and given new urgency to undertaking effective measures to reduce migrants' vulnerabilities, which have generally been exacerbated during this period. Several countries highlighted actions taken that have directly and indirectly served to reduce risks facing migrants whilst affording them greater protection and stability. Measures taken by Spain include extension of universal access to health services for all migrants regardless of legal status; the creation of a permanent national scheme of Minimal Vital Income, which is accessible for nationals and for foreigners with at least one year of legal and interrupted residence in Spain; adoption of measures to facilitate the work of resident migrants in economic sectors especially affected by the pandemic; and facilitation of automatic extension of residence and work permits that have lapsed during administrative closures due to the pandemic. Ireland has put in place firewalls for undocumented migrants to access services and justice during the pandemic without fear of immigration enforcement, whist Portugal and Italy have taken measures to facilitate regularisation of migrants. Spain and Belgium have instituted alternatives to detention, and Bulgaria, Denmark, Lithuania and the Russian Federation have suspended forced returns.

In responding to the pandemic, municipalities again demonstrated the importance of their engagement in affording access to relevant services and support for migrants, including by granting migrants access to medical treatment that they would be unable to obtain at the national level. This highlights a theme echoed throughout the consultations, namely, that effective implementation of the GCM requires a whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach, and the contributions of municipalities in managing migration-related challenges must be acknowledged with corresponding resources, competences and roles in shaping national-level policies in the migration domain.

Beyond offering an overview of more recent policies and measures adopted in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic to address migrants' vulnerabilities, Member States provided details on some of the more innovative initiatives they are pursuing nationally, regionally and internationally in cooperation with a range of actors.

In acknowledging integration into society as essential step in reducing migrants' vulnerabilities, Portugal noted the work of its High Commission for Migration with other public services to operate National Migrant Integration Support Centres that provide a one-stop-shop for integrated services to assist migrants with social and legal support, family reunification, qualification and skills training, entrepreneurship, health and nationality assessment matters. Serbia's "Standard Operating Procedures for Protection of Refugee and Migrant Children" was recognized by the Council of Europe as a good practice in terms of child-friendly approaches in the area of migration. The United Kingdom has increased its efforts to identify and tackle organised international crime groups operating in 13 origin, transit and destination countries across Europe and Africa. This includes cooperation with France to reduce the number of dangerous "small boat" crossings across the English Channel. The United Kingdom's "Modern Slavery Innovation Fund" has also built evidence and tested how best to address vulnerabilities in migratory contexts.

Several UNECE Member States, including Germany, the United Kingdom, Norway, the Netherlands and Denmark noted their contributions to humanitarian programming targeting vulnerable migrants in contexts across the globe. Such contributions include Denmark's support for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) projects on strengthening human rights fulfilment in migration governance and border management 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 Region. Germany's efforts to prevent conflict, tackle the root causes of displacement and assist displaced people as well as host communities in crisis situations includes support through crisis instruments such as Transitional Development Assistance and the Special Initiative "Tackling the root causes of displacement, reintegrating refugees".

Objective 8: Save lives and establish coordinated international efforts on missing migrants

In detailing efforts and challenges in saving lives and coordinating international action on missing migrants, particular attention has been given to search and rescue (SAR) operations in the Mediterranean, the responsibilities of coastal states in upholding obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and shortcomings of Member States and regional authorities in upholding their legal obligations. In this regard, Stakeholders have noted a specific failure of some Member States to afford due protection to refugees and asylum seekers as guaranteed under the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (Geneva Refugee Convention). Participants within the consultations were reminded of the imperative of taking a human-rights based perspective of the GCM, whilst Member States were called upon to uphold their collective responsibility to save lives of migrants at sea without criminalising the legitimate humanitarian action of organisations supporting rescue operations.

Whilst several UNECE Member States confirm their support for provisions under UNCLOS relevant to SAR operations and acknowledge the responsibility of coastal states in upholding legal obligations for this within their jurisdictions, they also affirm support for joint operations undertaken by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex), which assists Member States by coordinating and organising joint operations, taking into account that some situations may involve humanitarian emergencies and rescue at sea. As state responsibility for SAR is increasingly supported by regional actors, a number of stakeholders and Member States have pointed to a dereliction of duty by coastal states and disproportionate emphasis on border protection at the cost of upholding human rights obligations. It was emphasised that NGOs and human rights actors must not be prevented from carrying out independent monitoring along land and maritime borders, and that violations of the Geneva Refugee Convention or the European Convention on Human Rights must be penalised.

Notwithstanding the criticisms levelled at some UNECE Member States and regional authorities, progress in implementation of Objective 8 was evident within the regional review. Via the Belgium Red Cross' 'tracing' department,

Belgium is supporting families who are looking for relatives from whom they have been separated by conflict, and on International Day of the Missing (30 August) 2018, the Belgian Red Cross launched a new website for family tracing. The website is also a practical tool to consult Belgian legislation regarding family reunification. Spain reports rescue at sea of some 50,000 migrants in 2018 and almost 18,000 in 2019 in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, and notes improvement in cooperation with neighbouring coastal states and increased solidarity in disembarkations from the Central Mediterranean. Operation Poseidon was likewise presented as a successful collaboration, within which the United Kingdom reported 145 SAR operations undertaken with the HMC Valiant throughout 2019-2020 in the Aegean, resulting in the rescue of 1,584 people.

Objective 9: Strengthen the transnational response to smuggling of migrants

Within the UNECE region, the transnational response to address smuggling of migrants remains a clear priority of Member States and stakeholders. Whilst the phenomenon persists in concerning proportions both within the UNECE region and beyond, efforts to combat smuggling continue through deepened cooperation at the national, regional and international levels. Participants were reminded by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) that globally, smuggling of migrants generates 5-7 billion dollars USD annually, and in cooperatively approaching this issue in countries of origin, transit and destination, there is a need to recognise the indivisibility and the interconnectedness of global agendas for sustainable development, peace, rule of law, security and human rights. Stakeholders noted the recent evidence suggesting the COVID-19 pandemic is contributing to an upsurge in smuggling whilst exacerbating risks to migrants, thus necessitating greater attention from Member States in upholding and ensuring the effective implementation of relevant international law in protecting the most vulnerable, including smuggled migrants and trafficked persons.

At the national level, several Member States acknowledged the challenges they continue to face in tackling smuggling across their borders and in dismantling and prosecuting smuggling networks in cooperation with regional and international partners. Confirmation of adherence to legal instruments, including the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto, including the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, was provided by several Member States. Several Member States noted the transposition of relevant legislation, including EU Directives, and development of associated measures for effective implementation of provisions. Member States' references to national plans to combat smuggling and trafficking often highlighted the distinction made within such plans to demarcate these two distinct crimes and their potential overlap. To this end, Member States likewise confirm dedicated training for immigration officers, guardians and reception officers, as well as law enforcement and border security officials in investigative techniques, including the integration of gender considerations in combating organized crime. International cooperation for relevant training is being offered by a number of countries, including Canada, through its management of the Human Smuggling Envelope (HSE), which provides assistance to strengthen the capacity of source and transit states in combatting migrant smuggling networks. Operationally, several EU Member States actively cooperate with EU Agencies, such as Europol and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) in conducting joint activities to prevent and repress smuggling of migrants and other forms of cross-border crime.

Croatia's Ministry of the Interior initiated cooperation with the relevant services of Albania, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina resulting in submission of a joint EU-funded project aimed at combatting migrant smuggling in the region of Southeast Europe. The Government has adopted conclusions on enhancing cooperation with Western Balkans partners in the field of migration and security, emphasising efforts to combat human smuggling.

Despite such achievements, UNECE Member States noted persisting challenges, including a need for more material, technical and human resources for supporting smuggled migrants within increasing migration flows, as well as a need for specific strategies to support and protect the most vulnerable smuggled migrants, especially women and children.

EU Member States acknowledged that European Integrated Border Management (as defined in Regulation (EU) 2019/1896) encompasses different aspects of border control, including measures to facilitate legitimate border crossings and, where appropriate, for the prevention and detection of cross-border crime at external borders, in particular migrant smuggling, trafficking in persons and terrorism. Implementation of the Regulation is mandatory for all EU member states. Further regional initiatives include the Council of Europe's "Action Plan on Refugee and Migrant Children" and intensified work in the past two years through relevant committees, including the European Committee on Crime Problems (CDC), which, in August 2020, resulted in the adoption of an "Action Plan on Fostering International Cooperation and Investigative Strategies in Fighting the Smuggling of Migrants".

The European Commission Services and the European External Action Service (EEAS) are is building partnerships to support partner countries in strengthening their capacities in the area of migration, including on the issue of migrant smuggling. The partnership with African countries is being further strengthened, building on the implementation of actions under the five pillars of the Joint Valletta Action Plan (2015), co-operation within the Khartoum and Rabat processes, and in the context of the cooperation with the African Union on migration. New projects such as the UNODC-led regional programmes in North Africa, Asia and the Middle East that tackle migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings have started. New information and awareness campaigns highlight the risks of irregular migration and migrant smuggling in countries of origin and transit. With partner countries along the Silk Route, comprehensive engagement was carried forward, including within the Budapest Process and dedicated project support. The EEAS confirms an intention to set up targeted counter-smuggling partnerships, which will support countries of origin and transit in capacity-building, both in terms of law enforcement frameworks and operational capacity, encouraging effective action by police and judicial authorities.

In supporting efforts at the international level to combat human trafficking and smuggling, a number of UNECE Member States, including Denmark and Norway, confirmed their financial contributions to IOM and UNODC efforts.

Objective 10: Prevent, combat and eradicate trafficking in persons in the context of international migration

The UNECE region has been at the forefront of efforts to establish and advance international law combatting trafficking in persons, and the priority of Member States and stakeholders in continuing to combat human trafficking is evident in actions undertaken to this end. Despite the concerted efforts of Member States – both individually and within regional and international cooperation, annual reports by Council of Europe's Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) consistently highlight important gaps in the prevention of child trafficking and the identification and protection of child victims of trafficking. It was noted that child protection systems in many countries are not fit to ensure timely responses to the rights and needs of migrant and asylum-seeking children at risk. A compendium of good practices has been developed based on GRETA's evaluation reports, and aims to support Member States in addressing gaps in identifying and assisting trafficked persons, including migrant and refugee children, and the prevention of (re)trafficking. Inconsistent and incomplete screening procedures, lack of legal counsel for potential trafficked persons, extended periods of detention, a lack of adequate safeguards to prevent exploitation and abuse, and insufficient availability of specialist facilities for counselling and accommodation, including for male victims of trafficking and minors, are concerns in some national contexts. It was noted that such deficiencies can exacerbate the risk of re-trafficking.

There are however notable instances of progress towards improved implementation of this objective highlighted within national and sub-regional context across the UNECE region. In addition to approving its "Plan of Action against Human Trafficking 2018-2020", Albania has taken steps to ratify international conventions, signed agreements and protocols, and invested in deeper and more consistent information exchange with other state agencies. Following downgrading in the annual Trafficking in Persons (TIPS) report, Armenia has made amendments and supplements to its "Law On identification of and support to victims of trafficking in human beings and exploitation", including new measures for financial support to child victims of trafficking; a procedure for sharing information about victims of trafficking and exploitation; and a new referral mechanism. State programmes have been established for psychosocial rehabilitation of trafficked persons, with a particular focus on women and girls, and for monetary compensation for victims of trafficking. Azerbaijan has adopted its "National Action Plan on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2020- 2024" and foresees improvement of the legal and regulatory framework as well as increased preventive measures and criminal prosecution for human trafficking offenses. Canada has made efforts to identify individuals who may be at risk of human trafficking in the country, and in 2019, legislative amendments were made to Canada's Criminal Code, which help to facilitate the proof of human trafficking offences and the seizing of related proceeds of crime. Canada's new "National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking" is recognized as a horizontal, whole-of-government initiative that brings together all government efforts under five pillars: empowerment, prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnerships.

Kazakhstan has approved its "Action Plan for the Control, Prevention and Combating the Crimes of Trafficking in Persons for 2018-2020" and passed legislation for a compensation fund which will support identified victims of trafficking. The 2020 Trafficking in Persons Report recognizes the significant efforts of Serbia in meeting standards for the elimination of trafficking, noting the Government's adoption of standard operating procedures for the identification, referral, and support of trafficked persons. Serbia has improved many legal acts so as to include human trafficking and its consequences, and the national "Strategy for Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Humans, Especially Women and Children and Protection of the Victims" incorporates a number of GRETA recommendations. Spain has developed a toll-free 24/7

telephone line and email service within the National Police and Civil Guard for public access to fight human trafficking, whilst Turkey confirms initiation of a number of dedicated projects in cooperation with international partners, including IOM, UNHCR and GRETA, which carried out its first monitoring mission to the country in 2018.

Whilst there is clear benefit within national contexts derived from regional approaches within the UNECE region for preventing, combatting and eradicating trafficking in persons and in enhancing the identification and protection of, and assistance to, migrants who have become trafficked, new regional plans have been criticised. Concerns have been raised that proposed pre-entry screening procedures lack adequate safeguards for trafficked persons and that they fail to make thorough screening compulsory, rather only as considered relevant by authorities, which may create opportunities for inconsistency and critical omissions. Potential trafficking victims' lack of access to legal advice and automatic detention for periods up to 10 days have prompted concern that safeguards will not be put in place and will be inadequate, as has the lack of a clear obligation upon authorities to act on vulnerabilities identified and to refer people into National Referral Mechanisms.

Objective 11: Manage borders in an integrated, secure and coordinated manner

Some stakeholders noted that there were shortcomings in the implementation of the GCM's Objective 11 and related provisions of international and human rights law that underpin it. Some participants recalled the legal obligation and moral imperative of ensuring a human-rights based approach to border protection and a collective responsibility to save lives. The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants expressed unreserved concern for the numerous complaints of human rights violations towards migrants his office has received and acknowledged that violations of international norms and standards such as mass/collective expulsions, collective pushbacks, the lack of individual assessment, incidents of refoulement and the suspension of action on admission procedures, including asylum. . He specifically called for a suspension of forced returns during the pandemic, reduced immigration detention and prohibition of immigration detention of children.

The Special Rapporteur's call on Member States to continue to uphold human rights obligations towards migrants whilst embracing the GCM's principles of multilateral cooperation in strengthening migration policies for the mutual benefit of countries and migrants across the region was echoed by several participants and reflected in the voluntary submissions of a number of stakeholders. They emphasised a need to prosecute abuses at borders and violations of migrants' human rights, demanding more accountability and transparency from Member States and to allow activities of both humanitarian actors and independent human rights monitors. The GCM's Child-sensitive guiding principle emerged as a clear focus within reporting relevant to Objective 11 in voluntary submissions of stakeholders, as well as a predominant theme of the multi-stakeholder consultation held as part of the Regional Review. Despite being a guiding principle, it was suggested that Member States have not sufficiently operationalised this principle within the policies and procedures through which the GCM is implemented. Stakeholders were categorical in emphasising that child protection authorities must be involved in all cases involving migrant children, that 'best interest of the child' assessments must be undertaken for each child in considering options for return, and that detention is never in the best interest of the child.

Some Stakeholders have likewise raised concerns regarding the new Pact on Migration and Asylum proposed by the European Commission in September 2020, which include proposals for faster asylum determination procedures at EU borders, including through a pre-entry screening phase and a stronger focus on effective return of persons found not to be in need of international protection. Concern was expressed for the human rights implications of a perceived increase in externalisation of European migration policy, and the reports of incidents of police violence against migrants. Conditions of reception and asylum facilities, and the need for adequate access to basic services such as healthcare, psychosocial support, legal aid and child education available to migrants were also highlighted by some stakeholders.

Several Member States offered updates on achievements witnessed and challenges encountered in implementing Objective 11. Albania noted a project with IOM in taking measures to cope with an increase of irregular migrants and asylum-seekers, including efforts to strengthen border management capacity. The Government regularly updates its Contingency Plan for mass mixed migration flows, giving particular attention to vulnerable people. Albania signed a cooperation agreement with the European Union in 2018 on border management support from Frontex, with which a new "Strategy of Integrated Border Management" is under preparation. With the support of the European Union, Armenia has continued its process of modernizing the country's border crossing points along the northern border with Georgia. Improvements include the simplification of procedures, upgrading of infrastructure and equipment and improved security and capacity building. Similar work is now underway with the support of UNDP and the International Centre for Migration

Policy Development (ICMPD) on the modernisation of border crossing points on the southern border of the Armenia with Iran.

In March 2020, the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Migration and Refugees of the Council of Europe, together with the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, published a note on the main fundamental rights safeguards applicable at their Member States' external borders. The note aims to support EU and Council of Europe Member States in their duties when taking protective measures, including to contain the spread of the COVID-19 virus, and addressing questions related to public order, public health, or national security challenges. The note focuses on, inter alia, how to respect the principle of non-refoulement, and what can be done to help the most vulnerable, in particular unaccompanied children.

Objective 12: Strengthen certainty and predictability in migration procedures for appropriate screening, assessment and referral

As highlighted in discussions, response to the COVID-19 pandemic has underlined the need for improved transparency and predictability regarding immigration procedures, both within and beyond the borders of UNECE Member States. To this end, Member States and stakeholders continue to undertake measures to strengthen certainty and predictability of migration procedures for appropriate screening, assessment and referral, though inconsistencies and challenges have been pointed out – both as regards measures taken to counteract the spread of COVID-19, as well as under otherwise normal conditions.

There is evidence of continued and deepened cooperation with international partners and subregional approaches to enhancing effective integrated border management, including development of specialized trainings for border authorities. Albania, Canada and North Macedonia cited continued training and capacity building of Border and Migration Police with the support of IOM. Within the context of its "Global Strategy: Beyond Detention", UNHCR has continued to conduct research, develop tools and training material to relevant to improving integrated border management, including addressing the growing use of immigration detention, particularly of children. The Special Representative of the Secretary General on Migration and Refugees of the Council of Europe highlighted the launch of its new "Handbook for frontline professionals on how to convey child-friendly information to children in migration", which was developed in collaboration with UNHCR, the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA), the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) and Frontex, as well as a compilation of promising practices on migration-related child-friendly procedures: "Promoting child-friendly approaches in the area of migration: standards, guidance and current practices", which provides an overview of procedures concerning entrance and identification, child-friendly asylum and migration processes, special protection measures, and durable solutions. Research underpinning this compilation confirmed a gap between the standards set by the various instruments and their implementation. Indeed, a number of stakeholders noted a sustained focus on security aspects of border management, particularly in the context of mixed migration movements, that in some cases hindered effective implementation of appropriate screening, assessment and referral. A number of Member States including Ireland, Malta and Belgium, offered reflection on the good practices adopted in screening and referral of migrant children, including unaccompanied migrant children, and the procedures and institutional competencies devised for ensuring the best interest of the child is upheld.

Despite such good practices, a number of Member States highlighted continuing challenges in definitively determining the age of minors, and inconsistent and incomplete application of procedures. Pushbacks of entire groups of migrants arriving at borders and the summary expulsion of migrants identified within national territories were highlighted as violations of international law, effectively denying access to asylum, application on principle of non-refoulement and other procedures for vulnerable individuals, including children. The existence and extent of such occurrences and practices was contested.

New proposals for regional approaches for external screening at borders were criticized for lacking provisions enabling adequate access to information for migrants and gaps in availability of legal aid, including through measures to exclude NGOs from supporting information provision during pre-entry screening procedures. In this regard, concern was expressed that NGOs and volunteers were increasingly being criminalized for providing life-saving information at external borders. A number of Member States and stakeholders supported a clear call for strengthened capacities for more efficient, transparent and uniform approaches to protection-sensitive and human rights-compliant border procedures, especially in the case of migrant children.

Objective 13: Use migration detention only as a measure of last resort and work towards alternatives

Within their voluntary reports, stakeholders reported that European National Human Rights Institutes (NHRIs) identify that formally detaining migrants or depriving them of their liberty through other means has become the rule rather than the exception, particularly at the borders. Stakeholders contend that migrants are routinely deprived of their liberty at the borders without prior consideration of alternatives, individual assessments, identification of vulnerabilities or consideration of the facilities in which they would be placed. Detention of migrant children, either unaccompanied or with their families, in places such as closed centres at the airports, border facilities, police stations and transit zones has been highlighted as a persisting and increasingly critical concern.

Whilst some countries, including Canada, Belgium, Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom have adapted their policies and practices to reduce or eliminate immigration detention during the pandemic through the use of alternatives, stakeholders contend that it is rather public health concerns that are witnessed to have prompted consideration of alternatives to detention as opposed to acknowledgement of the rights and interests of migrants. Nonetheless, stakeholders and some Member States acknowledged that adoption of alternative measures to immigration detention during the pandemic has proven the possibility of abandoning the use of immigration detention, and participants in the consultation were invited to follow outcomes of the peer learning exchange organized by the UN Network on Migration Working Group on Alternatives to Detention. The European Alternatives to Detention Network (ATD Network) is promoting alternatives to immigration detention and currently running pilot projects in seven European countries - Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Poland, the United Kingdom, Italy, and Greece.

In their voluntary contributions, several UNECE Member States confirm that national legislation defines immigration detention as a measure of last resort for the shortest period of time possible, noting the existence of procedural safeguards and measures to ensure migrants' rights to legal assistance and that opportunities for communication with families and embassies are guaranteed pending eventual return. A number of Member States acknowledged associated challenges and a need to seek alternatives, such as measures in Belgium, which include open facilities for families that offer children the opportunity to continue school. Croatia reports having transposed legislation related to the use of less corrective measures imposed as an alternative to detention (depositing travel documents, money, regular contacting of the competent authorities and ban on leaving the address of accommodation). Malta reported that the detention requirement has been waived with respect to vulnerable persons, including families with children, pregnant women and unaccompanied migrant children, and that national regulations for reception of asylum seekers provide for recourse to alternatives to detention by Immigration Police, including reporting at an assigned place within specified timeframes; residence at an assigned place; deposit or surrender of documents; or placing of a one-time guarantee or surety. The United Kingdom has reported on its ongoing work with UNHCR, faith and community groups to develop a number of pilots that will provide support to a range of migrants. The pilots are assessing the impact of community support to individuals at risk of detention to make voluntary decisions regarding their immigration options, and whether the support provided can help them to make positive next steps toward concluding their cases. It is envisaged that the results of the pilots will contribute to global research around best practice on alternatives to detention.

At the regional level, the Council of Europe reports that its 2017-2019 "Action Plan on Protecting Refugee and Migrant Children" included an action to avoid resorting to the deprivation of liberty of children on the sole ground of their migration status, and notes achievements in promoting alternatives to immigration detention, as well as by raising awareness about the negative impact of detention on children and by enhancing the monitoring of places where children could be detained. In 2017, The Council of Europe Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH) published a comprehensive "Analysis on the Legal and practical aspects of effective alternatives to detention in the context of migration", which paid particular attention to the issue of immigration detention of children. Analysing practical experiences from the field, including various global and regional studies, the CDDH Analysis suggests key essential elements needed to render alternatives effective in practice. In October 2019, the CDDH published a user-friendly and visual Practical Guide for policy makers, legal professionals and other relevant stakeholders on how to effectively implement alternatives to immigration detention. The Practical Guide complements the CDDH Analysis and provides, inter alia, an overview of the existing non-custodial alternatives, including family-based care arrangements for children and certain essential elements that render alternatives effective. It highlights the specific steps to be taken in order to make alternatives to immigration detention effective in particular national contexts, taking into account existing strengths and capacities.

Objective 14: Enhance consular protection, assistance and cooperation throughout the migration cycle

Despite the situation presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and impact on normal rules of travel, few UNECE Member States and stakeholders have reported on actions to strengthen consular protection and assistance. Consultations highlighted some countries' actions to extend visas in measures to avoid situations of irregularity resulting from pandemic-related travel interruptions, but discussions and Member States' inputs have contained limited specific reflection as regards the challenges and achievements in implementing goals foreseen under the GCM's Objective 14 during the COVID-19 period.

A number of UNECE Member States confirmed the existence of regular channels and procedures for affording timely and effective consular service, assistance and protection to citizens, including EU Member States, which, under the EU Directive on Consular Protection, extend consular services to EU citizens whose country is not locally represented. A handful of UNECE Member States have highlighted specific developments in developing procedures and systems to facilitate consular services. With the support of IOM, Azerbaijan has launched a project aiming to establish an Electronic Readmission Case Management System to strengthen institutional links between consulates and other officials of countries of origin and destination and to ensure certainty, security and dignity upon return and readmission. Portugal, in addition to the 144 municipalities with which it has already established protocols, has initiated negotiations with Argentina to develop a Memorandum of Understanding on consular matters. Spain reported adopting new measures in response to the COVID-19 crisis to enable repatriation and the operation of an Emergency Office and central telephone service to assist both nationals and foreign residents of Spain. Sweden established a model for consular protection and support for children and young people as well as psychosocial support for children deported unaccompanied from the USA.

North Macedonia emphasised that one of its foreign policy priorities is to strengthen consular services as well as intentions to strengthen the diplomatic and consular offices of the country abroad. To that end, plans are being developed to improve awareness raising amongst certain consular services, as well reductions in time required for implementing consular activities, including issuance of birth, marriage and death certificates, passports and property documents.

Objective 15: Provide access to basic services for migrants

As has been witnessed in reviewing the status of implementation of other GCM objectives, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the exacerbation of pre-existing inequalities across the UNECE region. The immediate impact on migrants' access to services as afforded by Member States independently and in cooperation with civil society partners, was a central theme of discussions throughout the review process. In several countries, migrant workers have been disproportionately subjected to job loss and the inability to access safety nets, including unemployment benefits and a range of basic services and support for themselves and their families. Migrant workers with an irregular status have been particularly impacted by restrictions placed on formal and informal sectors and increasing numbers have become dependent upon assistance from local charitable organisations and humanitarian actors. Whilst migrant workers performing essential functions continued to provide frontline services within countries' national responses to the pandemic, they often did so under conditions that compromised their own health and safety. As national governments enacted measures to limit the spread of the virus, many institutions responsible for providing critical support and services to migrants were made to curtail operations or ceased functioning all together for extended periods of time, depriving access to critical channels of support for many. Responses to the pandemic across a number of UNECE Member States are seen to have resulted in increased vulnerabilities for migrant women and children in particular.

Despite acknowledged challenges and inadequacies, several UNECE Member States have taken deliberate steps to address gaps in migrants' access to basic services. Migrants in Ireland, regardless of status, have access to basic services, including health and education. Ireland's supplementary welfare allowance scheme offers a safety net within the Irish social welfare system by providing assistance to those whose means are insufficient to meet their own needs and those of their dependents. Spain guaranteed universal access to its national public health system in 2018 and is working to expand access to other basic services such as education, whilst Greece guarantees unlimited access to education and health services for migrant children, irrespective of their parents' legal status in the country. The Portuguese government has moved to provide all migrants with social security numbers, regardless of legal status, allowing them to access essential social support and strongly facilitating their regularisation processes. The Russian Federation has made efforts to increase access to public services though designation of integrated online portals for state and local services, and increased digitalisation of services

and information was cited by several Member States and stakeholders as an important part of strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The invaluable contribution of cities as frontline actors in providing migrants with access to basic services was a predominant theme in both voluntary submissions and discussions within the regional review. Through the Call to Local Action launched in November 2019 by the Global Forum for Migration and Development's (GFMD) Mayors Mechanism, local and regional governments have been engaged in taking concrete action to implement the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and Global Compact on Refugees. The cities of Milan, Strasbourg and Bristol have taken up this call and provided details on assistance provided to migrants within their municipalities. Strasbourg is taking steps to integrate public systems and services for more comprehensive and inclusive outreach to migrants in the city, including though programmes of volunteer accompaniment. Within its response to the COVID-19 crisis, Bristol took more than 300 homeless people into emergency accommodation, including several migrants with "No Recourse to Public Funds" status, which prevents them from accessing mainstream state support. Bristol therefore set up a "One City Task Force" comprising representatives from local government, civil society, and others to identify the necessary support and longer-term pathways for everyone in emergency accommodation, including migrants and those seeking asylum. Milan has stated its ambition to enhance the quality of its social integration services, with particular regard to education, through its "WISH MI-Wellbeing Integrated System of Milan", which seeks to improve social inclusion services and access to quality education for all Milanese children and teenagers, including minors with a migrant background. In response to the COVID-19 crisis, Milan has collected donations of personal computers and tablets to ensure that unaccompanied migrant children maintained equal access to education and Italian language classes. Additionally, the city developed an online platform with classes and educational materials for migrant and refugee adults, including professional training and up-to-date information on the pandemic.

Youth across a number of UNECE Member States were likewise recognised as particularly engaged in actions dedicated to ensuring migrants obtain better access to basic services. According to research undertaken by the UN Major Group on Children and Youth have been at the forefront of helping migrants access basic services, including through support as volunteer social workers to help migrants gain knowledge and access to institutions and services; providing or facilitating migrants' access to essential services such as education, health, social support, housing, and legal advice; and providing mentoring and support through the implementation of a 'buddy system', linking with other migrants or host community members. In line with a whole-of-society approach, youth have called upon governments to increase funding for support organisations and increasing availability and scope of support services and offices to allow migrants to more readily access those services that will enable them to participate in the formal economy and other formal institutions. Significantly, the voice of youth was raised on behalf of children and their right to education, regardless of status, and governments and authorities were called to take measures to reduce bureaucratic and administrative barriers to education for migrant children, as well as to provide more targeted support through scholarships and language classes.

Objective 16: Empower migrants and societies to realize full inclusion and social cohesion

Inclusion and social cohesion of migrants within UNECE Member States' societies is a key priority, and innovative approaches are being pursued within their efforts to realise the GCM's Objective 16. Participants were called to remember that integration – the concept most commonly referred to in reporting on actions under this Objective – does not equate inclusion. Emphasis on the importance of social inclusion of migrants as determinant of the well-being of communities overall was stressed by several participants, and the role of individuals and institutions at the community, local and national levels was noted. It was acknowledged that integration is a condition closely interconnected with meaningful access to services for all migrants, including women and children, and many Member States' reporting on Objective 16 suggests that this consideration is central to their understanding, though completeness and coherence of policy does not always reflect this in practice.

At the local level, measures are being taken by a range of actors to promote inclusion of migrants and enhanced social cohesion within communities, and several examples of municipal-level action evince proactive stances of local authorities in promoting this goal. Stakeholder support for social dialogue programmes designed to enable integration of migrant pupils at all levels of education are seeking to better prepare educators to take a more deliberate role in supporting integration, acknowledging the clear benefits that diversity can bring to learning environments, whilst leveraging synergies across different local and national level stakeholders to identify common solutions. The need to include migrants in dialogue relevant to informing approaches and actions promoting inclusion and social cohesion was emphasised, and recognition for the active role that migrants are taking themselves to develop initiatives within municipalities was stressed

as a positive opportunity and existing entry point for engagement in several contexts. Indeed, recognition for the role of cities within the UNECE region in promoting inclusion and social cohesion has prompted important initiatives which promise positive outcomes. In collaboration with other United Kingdom cities, Bristol is establishing a cross-city "Taskforce on Migrant Inclusion", comprising key stakeholders from across the city (business, universities, and civil society organisations), which will develop and oversee the implementation of an "Action Plan for Migrant Inclusion" based on the Inclusive Cities Framework devised by the University of Oxford's Centre on Migration, Policy and Society. Milan has confirmed its intention to continue to participate in the "ADmin4ALL - Phase 2" project, financed by the European Commission (DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion) and implemented by IOM in over 30 municipalities across 7 EU countries: Italy, Austria, Poland, Romania, Spain, Greece and Malta.

At the national level, several UNECE Member States and stakeholders offered reflection on the need to continue to promote migrants' inclusion and social cohesion, and stakeholders noted that migrant integration, inclusion and social cohesion must be regarded not only from the perspective of the host society, but also migrant communities.

Responding to the increased migration to Armenia in recent years, the government has initiated drafting of the "2021-2031 Strategy of the Migration Policy of the Republic of Armenia" including a "Regulation of Integration and Reintegration Issues". Ireland adopted its "Migrant Integration Strategy – A Blueprint for the Future", as well as a "National Intercultural Health Strategy" and an "Intercultural Education Strategy" in 2017. The country's approach to supporting multiculturalism and integration in its education system was highlighted as a model of good practice in the 2018 UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report. Germany promotes language learning, professional training, employment, education and social integration measures, based on the principle of equal opportunity. They apply to all eligible persons, regardless of national, ethnic or religious background. The Federal Government's integration policy is based on the principle 'fördern und fordern' – i.e., support with integration is offered, but efforts are also expected of immigrants. Institutions at all federal levels and civil society are asked to join their efforts to support the process of integration. In 2018, Germany's Federal Government initiated a new National Action Plan for Integration. In March 2021 the Federal Government presented more than 100 measures (including on the areas of housing, work, health, education and dealing with racism) at the chancellor`s Integration Summit to support integration, diversity and social cohesion. The United Kingdom has invested in a range of interventions in response to the challenges faced by migrants to facilitate their successful integration including the "Integration Area Programme". This place-based approach to addressing local integration challenges is expected to benefit thousands of people living in England – helping them to better integrate, participate fully in society and access the opportunities that life in modern Britain provides. The "Integrated Communities Fund" supports 16 projects in England that stimulate and test innovative approaches to integration, which are expected to generate important learning on how to bridge divides and bring communities together.

Proposed regional approaches to supporting integration for more inclusive societies have been criticised for being embedded in a legal framework which fails to address migrants' needs and sets eligibility criteria for social services based on the residence status of individuals, with the tangible risk of fragmenting communities' and families' access to services. As integration is a condition which is closely interconnected with meaningful access to services, excluding irregular migrants from the provisions on access to social services was also suggested to be in open contradiction to the content of Objective 15 of the Global Compact on Migration, in which governments commit 'to ensure that all migrants, regardless of their migration status, can exercise their human rights through safe access to basic services".

Objective 17: Eliminate all forms of discrimination and promote evidence-based public discourse to shape perceptions of migration

UNECE Member States and stakeholders participating in the GCM regional review reiterated a shared commitment to combatting discrimination against migrants and taking concerted action in fighting xenophobia in society. Within the consultations, participants were reminded by OHCHR of the imperative of political leaders to responsibly engage in shaping public discourse that does not scapegoat migrants and that leaders must embrace positive narratives and opportunities to speak out against hate speech in addressing public attitudes towards migration within UNECE Member States. The vital role of data and evidence in supporting facts- and rights-based narratives on migration was underlined, which is of particular importance to addressing migrants' vulnerabilities and supporting integration in an era of rampant misinformation. Beyond shaping evidence-based migrant-positive narratives, it was acknowledged that discrimination and bias could be propagated through institutions and policies, which need to be revisited with a human rights approach.

Participants also noted that in many national contexts across the UNECE region, the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed to society how important migration is to aspects of daily life that many may have taken for granted. It also revealed that a lack of data on integration and health outcomes leads to policies that reinforce stereotypes and discrimination whilst putting vulnerable groups, who may not be captured in data, at a disadvantage in receiving necessary support. It was noted that the global COVID-19 pandemic presented opportunities to capitalise on the currency of migration in addressing misinformed perspectives and discourse across societies with increasingly tuned-in audiences. As such, the promise of broader cooperative efforts and campaigns to stamp out discrimination and xenophobia were noted to be having a positive impact across increasingly connected populations and societies within the UNECE region and beyond.

Acknowledging the importance of balanced narratives on migration in combating xenophobia and building support for diversity, Canada launched the "Immigration Matters" communications campaign in 2018, which uses a storytelling approach combined with facts and data to demonstrate the economic, social and cultural benefits of migration at the local level. Results from Gallup's second international "Migrant Acceptance Index" survey, conducted in 2019, indicate that Canada is leading the world on the acceptance of migrants with the highest score of all countries surveyed. In 2019, in order to support the promotion of more objective narratives on migration worldwide, Canada led the development of a communications guide that governments and key partners, including civil society and businesses, can use in promoting balanced narratives on migration and migrants. This guide was presented at the GFMD Summit in Quito, Ecuador in January 2020. Canada is now co-chairing, along with the Government of Ecuador and the GFMD Mayors Mechanism, a new multi-stakeholder GFMD Working Group on Public Narratives on Migration. Germany has developed a package of measures to better combat right-wing extremism and hate crime, which has provided legal foundations for more effective pursuit of hate crime online; adjustment of criminality of hate speech and aggressive insults; and intensified processing and monitoring of right-wing extremism both in the domestic intelligence services and the Federal Criminal Police. In March 2020, a cabinet committee was set up to develop measures to combat right-wing extremism and racism more effectively, with a focus on prevention, research, measures promoting integration, participation and diversity as well as measures for closer cooperation between legal authorities, authorities of national security and civil society. Representatives of migrant organisations, representatives of civil society and academics were also involved in the work of the committee. In November 2020, the Cabinet Committee presented a catalogue of measures with a total of 89 concrete activities. In spring 2021, a final report of the Cabinet Committee will be presented. Ireland, with the support of IOM, is establishing a "Global Migration Media Academy" (GMMA), which will provide training to media professionals globally in order to better prepare them in countering misleading and false narratives on migration. Ireland is also a member of the GFMD Working Group on Public Narratives on Migration. In cooperation with regional observatories, academia and civil society, Spain has undertaken efforts to expand and develop new projects of the National Observatory for Countering Xenophobia and Racism (OBERAXE) within the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration. Within its whole-of-government approach, an Inter-ministerial Framework was adopted in 2018 to implement the 2011 National "Strategy to Combat Racism, Xenophobia and other forms of Discrimination". The Government of the United Kingdom refreshed its "Hate Crime Action Plan" in 2018 and noted a number of key achievements under the 2016-2020 Action Plan, such as the inclusion of the "Places of Worship Scheme" to protect places of worship from hate crime. In 2018/19, the United Kingdom also ran a wide-ranging national public awareness campaign to publicly address hate crime and raise awareness of the law.

At the municipal level, the City of Bristol established the "#WeAreBristol" communications campaign to support social cohesion, promoting an inclusive local identity and preventing discrimination and xenophobia. Launched just prior to COVID-19, this became a particularly useful vehicle for positive messages around COVID-19 community solidarity and volunteerism.

Objective 18: Invest in skills development and facilitate mutual recognition of skills, qualifications and competences

The objective of investing in skills development and facilitating mutual recognition of skills, qualifications and competences was evidenced to remain a strong focus amongst Member States and a number of stakeholders. Whilst there is a clear need to continue to invest in skills development for migrants, particularly women and youth, obstacles remain at a number of levels in order to facilitate integration and their positive contributions to society. Continuing underinvestment in skills development and inadequate coordination between migrant sending and receiving countries is acknowledged to lead to inefficiencies and lost opportunities in leveraging migrants' contributions to the economic and social benefits afforded to both countries of destination and origin.

It was acknowledged that recognition of prior learning, including vocational qualifications obtained abroad continued to present obstacles to migrants' effective integration in local labour markets and broader society. Migrants are often witnessed to work for extended periods of time in jobs that do not correspond to their qualifications. In some countries, there are also protectionist tendencies that do not assess foreign training as adequate and give preference to employees who have undergone vocational training in countries of destination. In this regard, stakeholders pointed to the good example of Sweden's "fast track" programme, which aims to achieve complete individual adaptation to the labour market as quickly as possible, enabling participants to resume practice of a trade or profession that has already been learned through close cooperation with labour market-relevant actors. Legal barriers that prevent migrants with informally acquired skills or unrecognised training from entering some sectors, such as industry and manual trades, might be eased through similar upskilling, adaptation approaches and on-the-job training.

European youth mobilised by stakeholders within the scope of the consultation preparation formulated clear concerns and recommendations as regards a perceived need for Member States' continued investment in skills development and recognition of qualifications and competences. Migrant youth emphasised a need for greater assistance in matching skills and job opportunities, facilitating access to documentation which can affect recognition of qualifications, ensuring adequate opportunities for training, as well as language instruction to facilitate integration and in navigating administrative procedures.

Both in the interest of migrants and national economies, UNECE Member States and stakeholders are undertaking measures – independently and cooperatively – to address challenges and opportunities. The Republic of Moldova has established a mechanism for recognition and certification of skills acquired in the context of informal and nonformal education; Albania's new "National Strategy on Migration 2019-2022" and its Plan of Action has set skills development as a priority of labour force and labour market development. To this end, skills, qualifications, and competences obtained in foreign countries are being recognised in accordance with revised criteria. Malta's "Jobsplus" initiative has set up "Trade Testing" in order to assess individuals who have acquired knowledge, skills and competence in a particular occupation but do not possess a formal qualification. In Serbia, mutual recognition of skills, qualifications and competences has been institutionalized through the establishment of state Qualifications Agency and the adoption of the "Law on National Qualifications Framework in the Republic of Serbia", which institutionalised a system of qualifications acquired through formal and non-formal education. Uzbekistan highlighted efforts to improve the professional qualifications of the labour force, the opening of vocational training centres, and a focus on innovative measures for improving the skills and qualifications of the working-age population, especially young people.

As highlighted by participants, joint efforts by international agencies to support related objectives are notable collaborations. The "Global Skills Partnership on Migration" (GSP) forged by ILO, IOM, UNESCO, the International Organisation of Employers and the International Trade Union Confederation, aims to mobilise expertise towards supporting governments, educational and training institutions, employers and workers organisations to develop and recognise the skills of migrant workers with a particular focus on women and youth.

Objective 19: Create conditions for migrants and diasporas to fully contribute to sustainable development in all countries

Within voluntary submissions of UNECE Member States and stakeholders, reporting on GCM's Objective 19 reflects a focus on diaspora engagement in harnessing the contributions of migration to sustainable development in countries of origin, with relatively less emphasis given to migrants' contributions in destination communities. There was little dedicated discussion within the consultations regarding migrants' contributions to supporting achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals, though some Member States acknowledged the relative weakness of diaspora organisations present in their countries and lack of supportive policies to enable their engagement.

As regards UNECE Member States' efforts to support diaspora engagement, this has been pursued bilaterally and in cooperation with specialised agencies. In 2017, Albania established a State Minister for Diaspora and several agencies under this structure responsible for addressing diaspora issues. Diaspora engagement for development of the country is one of the government's priorities which is being supported by IOM through a dedicated programme focusing on capacity building and support to relevant government entities, transfer of social capital (fellowships) and financial capital (investments). Armenia's Office of the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs recently launched the "iGorts" programme, which will bring up to 100 diaspora Armenian professionals to lend their experience and knowledge towards improving and developing state institutions, policies, and programmes for 12 months. With support from IOM and the European

Union, Azerbaijan has undertaken a comprehensive diaspora mapping and preparation of a related report "Mapping the Azerbaijani Diaspora: Insights from Big Data". In line with the whole-of-society approach specified in the GCM, the publication provides the Government with insights into the skills and demographic profiles of Azerbaijani diaspora communities to develop an engagement strategy and identify potential partnerships. The Republic of Moldova has recognised the importance of diaspora engagement within its national development strategy, including remittance contributions, and following the success of its "Diaspora Engagement Hub", the "DAR 1+3 – Diaspora Succeeds at Home" programme has been launched for 2019-2025.

Through its ''Migration and Diaspora Programme" (PMD), the German Federal Government harnesses the potential of diaspora engagement to drive social and economic development in 22 partner countries. The PMD offers funding and advice for organizations carrying out projects with partners in countries of origin. The programme also facilitates knowledge and skill transfer by supporting temporary assignments of diaspora professionals in institutions of partner countries as well as the voluntary return of highly qualified experts to their countries of origin. The programme supports reintegration into the local job market so that returning experts can contribute with the professional knowhow they have acquired in Germany. In 2019, North Macedonia adopted a strategy for cooperation with the diaspora, which contains specific goals to map the diaspora and engage on specific goals of mutual interest in establishing business cooperation and education. Moldova has also developed a new Action Plan for the National Strategy "Diaspora-2025", which aims to strengthen relationships with the diaspora and enhance its involvement in the country's development by harnessing the diaspora's material resources and human capital.

Objective 20: Promote faster, safer and cheaper transfer of remittances and foster financial inclusion of migrants

It was emphasised by several UNECE Member States and stakeholders that well-managed regular migration and mobility of people can offer benefits for countries of destination as well as for countries of origin through contributions of remittances and labour migration (either as a sending or a receiving country). Indeed, the importance of diaspora and continued remittance flows to the economies of some UNECE Member States and migrants' communities of origin was directly linked to national economic security and poverty alleviation. Central Asian Member States noted that a drop in remittances entails a growing risk of poverty as a significant number of households with labour migrants working in other countries rely on remittances as their only source of income. Across the region, the COVID-19 pandemic has given renewed impetus to efforts to promote cheaper, faster and safer transfer of remittances, as well as the involvement of diasporas in the countries of origin, including for developing productive investment and sharing expertise. As economies slowed in the wake of restrictions imposed to curb the spread of the virus, migrant workers were among the most directly affected by the economic fallout of this crisis.

Acknowledging the impact on migrants and their communities of origin, on 19 March 2020, the Secretary-General of the United Nations called for an urgent and coordinated response from the international community to address the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in the launch of the "Remittance Community Task Force" (RCTF) by co-organisers of the Global Forum on Remittances, Investment and Development (GFRID) 2020, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the African Union and the World Bank Group. To date, 39 organizations have joined the RCTF, including international organizations, inter-governmental bodies, industry and private sector groups, diaspora networks and international experts on remittances. The RCTF includes a reference group of government representatives and national development agencies. The main outcome of the RCTF is the "Blueprint for Action - Remittances in Crisis: Response, Resilience, Recovery", which aims to improve response and support resilience and recovery of the global remittance market. The Blueprint for Action includes measures directed to government authorities, remittance service providers (RSPs) and diaspora groups.

At the national level, UNECE Member States and stakeholders noted efforts and challenges in achieving the aims of Objective 20, including lowering the average transaction costs and enabling greater financial inclusion of migrants. Given limited government influence on remittance transaction costs, the establishment of a non-profit, international digital remittance platform was suggested. In enabling financial inclusion of migrants working in informal sectors and of undocumented migrants, it was noted that asylum seekers, persons with temporary residence permits and those without fixed addresses are often restricted from opening bank accounts, and that further efforts should be directed to enabling entry into the banking system for individuals with a precarious residential status. Albania has taken steps to increase the legal channels of remittance transfers, including through implementation of the "National Strategy for the Market of Small Payments 2018-2023", which facilitates the promotion of electronic payments to increase the financial inclusion of the population, including migrants and their families. Germany supports diaspora investments for entrepreneurship in African

countries through the online platform "WIDU.africa" and funds "Geldtransfair.de", where users can compare costs and conditions for transferring money to over 35 countries. Through its "Harnessing Innovation for Financial Inclusion" programme, the United Kingdom is supporting efforts to increase the availability of digital payment systems.

At the international level, Sweden has confirmed its support for a new collaboration with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to utilize and increase the development effects of remittances in support of SDG and GCM implementation. Sweden's global support to the "Consultative Group to Assist the Poor" (CGAP) is reported to have contributed to the development of knowledge materials on cash support and financial inclusion in humanitarian situations, and migrants have been a target population in work on access to financial services.

Objective 21: Cooperate in facilitating safe and dignified return and readmission, as well as sustainable reintegration

Within the UNECE region, the independent actions of Member States and the cooperation amongst them in facilitating the safe and dignified return, readmission and sustainable reintegration of irregular migrants to countries of origin has historically been a contentious issue. Actions undertaken relevant to this Objective have served to create both polarisation and cooperation at the national, sub-regional and international levels. The COVID-19 pandemic has added further urgency to global and regional debate around the issues of return, readmission and reintegration in governing migration across the world, and while some states have suspended returns due to unsafe conditions, others have made efforts to ensure that those returning or who have been deported have access to support upon return, including health checks, adequate reception and accommodation for those self-isolating and in quarantine, and broader reintegration support. Practice has been mixed across the UNECE region, where stakeholders suggest there is evidence of forced returns without due process, including of unaccompanied and separated children, as well as numerous instances of violence, stigma and discrimination against returnees.

Within their contributions to the Regional Review, some stakeholders from across the UNECE region have focused primarily on Objective 21's provisions explicit to return, highlighting their concern for increasing use of summary collective expulsion of migrants and asylum seekers and pushbacks at borders. Human Rights Watch has documented the use of force and violence by border officials. Whilst some countries have suggested that investigations into allegations of abuse and violent pushbacks will be undertaken, some stakeholders suggested that efforts to address the issue should be more systematic. They note increasing challenges in undertaking independent monitoring at borders where it is alleged that authorities have actively sought to inhibit the legitimate activities of independent human rights monitors. Collective expulsion, including pushbacks, and violation of the principle of non-refoulement are claimed to be carried out at both land and maritime borders, including in contexts of mixed movements, thus denying individuals individual assessment and the right to seek asylum. Overt intimidation, physical violence and even torture are alleged by human rights organisations to be widespread.

In some instances, the actions of some border authorities were criticized by some stakeholders as failure in protecting and upholding the human rights of children, claiming that, instead of being referred to protection services and/or appointed a guardian in line with practices prescribed within national procedural protections of Member States and in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, are instead summarily denied entry or are otherwise detained and subsequently returned without due process. Some stakeholders suggested that some authorities failed to carry out the best interests of the child assessment as determination is not limited to children arriving at some UNECE Member States' borders, but also children already within the territory. It was suggested that within the national context of some UNECE Member States, child friendly information is still too often absent, asylum and return decisions are made with little to no involvement of social services or child welfare agencies and proper reintegration plans are often lacking. Stakeholders noted that clearer language within national and regional policies stating that no child should be returned unless this has been determined to be a sustainable solution in his or her best interest, would ensure that said safeguards are not omitted by Member States.

Within their voluntary reports, a number of UNECE Member States note the persisting challenge faced in carrying out dignified return and readmission due to lack of cooperation of the countries of origin of migrants, and emphasise a need for a whole-of-government approach in ensuring that returns are carried out in an effective and sustainable manner. UNHCR noted that dignified and sustainable return to their countries of origin of persons found not to be in need of international protection, or otherwise allowed to enter and stay, is an essential part of safeguarding the integrity of asylum systems and maintaining public support for refugee protection as well as for regular migration.

Despite the many issues highlighted, UNECE Member States report achievements within national and regional contexts, as well as international cooperation in implementing provisions of the GCM's Objective 21. Albania highlights continuing cooperation with IOM for assisted voluntary return and reintegration of Albanian migrants and the establishment of readmission agreements with several EU member states and the European Commission. Since February 2018, Armenia's Migration Service runs a "One Window" Reintegration Service, which plans to launch an online information system (#backtoarmenia) for citizens (as well as dual citizens) who intend to return to the Republic of Armenia. Within its voluntary return procedures, Belgium highlights children as one of the target groups for whom a specific approach has been developed with the goal of involving children in a positive way in the preparation for return. Belgium's "child booklet" prepares children before departure and throughout their journey back, emphasising space for children to voice their emotions and to talk to others about their return. The project "My Future" aims to support unaccompanied minors with little prospect of staying on a legal basis by offering intensive vocational training. Denmark has fostered institutional contacts with relevant officials from countries of origin and destination by appointing an Ambassador responsible for supporting return and readmission along with a Special Advisor on migration issues and three regional migration counsellors strategically posted at Danish embassies in select regions. Denmark aims to maintain and improve bilateral relations, assist in specific readmission cases and identify opportunities for enhancing reintegration opportunities in countries of origin. Funding for capacity building efforts is being allocated to support countries of origin and transit towards improved migration management.

Objective 22: Establish mechanisms for the portability of social security entitlements and earned benefits

Globally, the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed considerable gaps in labour protection implementation and a range of deficiencies in terms of legislation and practice in ensuring migrants' well-being and stability. Despite migrants' sacrifices and the oftentimes inadequate working conditions they face, essential work often is not translating into decent work, and migrant workers' families are left out of many policies. Within Central Asian countries of the UNECE region, stakeholders pointed to concerning structural and institutional flaws in the way migration is managed. In the wake of mass forced redundancies or compulsory unpaid leave of migrant workers in some countries, many were left with no income and dwindling savings. Whilst host countries made efforts to extend visas and residency permits and temporarily suspend deportations, a lack of social safety net protections for such migrant workers left them increasingly vulnerable. The absence of policies to enable portability of their earned benefits created a situation of limbo for many whereby they were unable to earn an income or benefit from social protection schemes in host countries, whilst also lacking the possibility of returning to their countries of origin with financial means afforded by earned social security entitlements and benefits.

It was highlighted in the Regional Review consultations that partnerships are needed to broaden the portability of entitlements and social protection within and across regions, including through BLMAs, and that efforts must continue to strengthen access to justice, portability of social security entitlements and wage protection systems, including payment of wages and end of service benefits before workers return home. The engagement and strengthening of trade unions was recognised as an important means to assisting migrant workers' in obtaining their rights.

A number of UNECE Member States pointed to existing or developing legislation and policies to enable portability of social security entitlements and earned benefits. Armenia has coordinated social security schemes and established mechanisms for the portability of social security benefits through bilateral agreements with primary destination countries of Armenian citizens, whilst Germany reports having met the objective of enabling portability of statutory pension benefits, which are provided in full to people who have worked in Germany and have earned a pension, regardless of nationality and place of residence. Ireland notes a number of bilateral agreements with non-EU/EEA countries and regular consultation by The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection via the Migrant Consultative Forum involving voluntary sector organisations working with migrants, to identify and address issues specific to customers of the Department who are migrants. Kazakhstan reported the establishment of a state programme for internal relocation of workers that assists also with the transfer of social protection entitlements, and a recent "Agreement on Pension for Workers" of the EU Member States was signed.

Malta confirmed policies for the conditional export of pensions worldwide, subject to individuals having completed enough years of contributions within the national scheme (also taking into account any insurance periods completed in the EU, Australia, Canada or New Zealand where a bilateral agreement is in force). Beyond a number of respective bilateral agreements, Portugal and Spain highlight the potential for bundling amongst EU Member States and point to the Ibero-American Multilateral Convention on Social Security, which currently covers 11 countries. The United Kingdom notes that

despite leaving the EU, rules on social security coordination remain the same as before during the transition period and the EU Withdrawal Agreement will protect entitled individuals after the transition period whilst a future system of coordination is negotiated.

Objective 23: Strengthen international cooperation and global partnerships for safe, orderly and regular migration

In the spirit of the GCM Regional Review, the relevance of international cooperation and global partnerships for safe, orderly and regular migration was a central theme echoed by UNECE Member States and stakeholders. Member States' and stakeholders' efforts to prepare voluntary reports for review by other participants, and their engagement within the consultations, are a visible testament of a shared commitment to multilateralism, cooperation and partnership under the umbrella of the GCM. Indeed, the spirit and thrust of the GCM's Objective 23 was referenced in one form or another in every voluntary report received, and reiterated by several Member States and stakeholders within their statements and reflections during three days of discussion. Several participants noted the importance of the GCM Regional Review as a critical platform for dialogue and exchange in supporting achievement of this cross-cutting Objective, and a number noted their participation in other international fora, such as the High-level Political Forum, the GFMD, IOM's International Dialogues on Migration and Regional Consultative Processes on migration. Within their voluntary reports, all Member States referenced bilateral, regional and multilateral cooperation through which they pursue goals contained within the GCM's 23 Objectives in addressing migration in countries of origin, transit and destination. Across the UNECE, there is visible will and a clear trajectory of increased cooperation and global partnership in addressing migration challenges and opportunities. Bi- and multilateral partnerships with countries in Africa, Asia and the Americas are expanding, and several UNECE Member States and regional actors are making strategic investments and leading efforts to build effective multilateral approaches based on solidarity, human rights and a rules-based international order. Financial support for the efforts of the United Nations' specialised agencies as well as closer cooperation with these entities, the UN Migration Network and a broader range of civil society organisations within the realm of migration was a commitment expressed by many UNECE Member States and regional actors. Calls for increased solidarity, unity of purpose and deepened cooperation in creating conditions for safe, orderly and regular migration within the UNECE region and beyond were echoed by Member States and stakeholders alike throughout the three days of discussion.

At the regional level, bilateral, regional and multilateral dialogues have intensified and encompass issues such as saving lives at sea, protecting the human rights of migrants, developing evidence-based migration governance systems, tackling migrant smuggling and human trafficking, enhancing border management, visa facilitation, promoting legal and circular migration and mobility, return, readmission and sustainable reintegration, as well as addressing the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement. Migration and mobility are also part of the new 2020 EU Communication "Towards a Comprehensive Strategy with Africa" and of the next cycle of EU-ACP relations. A number of African countries are partners in the first legal migration pilot projects managed by EU Member States and supported by the European Commission. Work in the area of integration of third-country nationals, notably in the labour market, has continued. The EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF), with over EUR 5 billion, allows the EU to work faster and with more flexibility jointly with African partners in the Sahel and Lake Chad, the Horn of Africa and in the North of Africa regions. So far, 254 actions consisting of 676 individual projects have been implemented under the EUTF.

A close, strategic partnership has been put in place with UN agencies in the context of the trilateral African Union-European Union-United Nations (AU-EU-UN) Task Force to address the situation of migrants and refugees stranded in Libya. Thanks to the work of the AU-EU-UN Task Force and with support of the EUTF, around 53,000 voluntary humanitarian returns have taken place since 2017. Assistance is being provided at disembarkation points and detention centres when access is possible, and support is offered to host communities, whilst alternatives to detention are being promoted. The EU-IOM "Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration" has been designed to provide a coherent framework to save lives and protect and assist migrants along the Central Mediterranean Route. The Initiative has contributed to assisting more than 85,435 migrants to return to their country of origin, mainly from Libya (32,996); and more than 98,570 migrants were assisted after their return, of which more than 66,000 have engaged in reintegration support in their country of origin.