



Sustainable Development Goals and Migration

Political document



**This publication is published by the Bulgarian Platform
for International Development.**

The publication is part of the three-year project Faces of Migration, SDGs and Migration – Multipliers and Journalists Addressing Decision Makers and Citizens, funded by the European Commission. It aims to raise public awareness on the sustainable development goals, migration and the relationship between them.

The following organisations are involved in the Faces of Migration project:

Leading partner - Diakonie ECCB; partnering organizations:
Global Call to Action Against Poverty (Belgium);
Bulgarian Platform for International Development (Bulgaria);
Federazione Organismi Cristiani Internazionale Volontario (Italy);
ActionAid Hellas (Greece);
Ambrela – Platform for Development Organisations (Slovakia);
Povod (Slovenia).



EUROPEAN UNION

This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of Bulgarian Platform for International Development and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union.

This publication is part of the SDGs and Migration – Multipliers and Journalists Addressing Decision Makers and Citizens project which is realized in the framework of the Development Education and Awareness Raising (DEAR) programme.

Introduction

The purpose of this document serves to raise awareness among the NGO representatives, media, policy makers on national and local level of the link between the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the challenges, related to the international migration. It is to be used when formulating theses and messages that can influence public opinion and the key stakeholders, including the decision makers. It can serve as a reference for formulation of a political document at implementation level of the international project “SDGs and Migration” Contract № CSO-LA/2018/401-798.

Context

The Sustainable Development Goals and Migration

On September 25th 2015 the Heads of the UN member-states adopted Declaration “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development”. The 2030 Agenda is an interconnected set of 17 goals in the area of sustainable development, divided into 169 concrete targets.

The sustainable development goals are formulated after a long discussion with the participation of countries, international governments and non-governmental organizations in compliance with universal principles and visions for the future of the humankind. The Sustainable Development Goals continue the international community’s efforts to meet the Millennium Development Goals 2000-2015. The aim is to realize all of the human rights. Three components are included equally – economic, social and ecological. The Goals are not legally binding on UN’s member-states, but the governmental leaders have a moral commitment to achieve them according to their own abilities and in compliance with their national priorities.

One of the most important issues raised in many of the Sustainable Development Goals as a horizontal principle or as a concrete target, is the migration. 10 from the indicators are related to migration, and 24 indicators can be disaggregated in the search of a specific presence of migrants and issues with migration. It is particularly important that the basic principle of “leave no one behind” applies to a large extent to migrants. Additional international documents valid in all countries have

Context

been developed for migration as a global challenge: **Global Compact on refugees and Global Compact for migration**. In response to the growing number of migrants - around 250 million in 2015, among them more than 20 million being transnational refugees the UN Summit was held in New York in October 2016 for the first time, dedicated to the refugees' and migrants' problems. The main objective was to achieve a better international division of responsibility and a better coordination within the world's community. The refugees and migrants topic has got actuality at the highest level the flows of refugees and migrants were accepted as a global challenge in New York that wants better and more concrete decisions on an international level. Refugee and migrant flows have been recognized as a global challenge that calls for better and more concrete solutions at the international level in New York.

The 2016 New York Declaration first addresses common problems for refugees and migrants, then examines the specific challenges for refugees and migrants, and reaffirms commitments already made by the international community. The member-states have united in the "New York Declaration" in achieving by the end of the adoption of "**Global Compact on Refugees**" and "**The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM)**". A consensus have been achieved on the first one, aiming at development of a comprehensive refugee response mechanism (Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework), and Bulgaria has joined. The second document has generated mixed reactions and many countries, including Bulgaria, voted abstention or rejected it during the New York vote at the end of 2018.

Context

Major theses and messages

Migration is a serious global challenge, which affects all the countries in the world. It can be legal and benefit both host countries and countries of origin. In the first case it could solve problems with the missing qualified people for national economics of the host country; in the second case it could improve the balance of payments of the sending country through regular remittances from migrant workers to invest in their home country or in support of their families. In the second case it can be illegal¹ or irregular, feeding human trafficking and migrant smuggling, leading to serious violations of human rights and loss of life, carry the threat of terrorism. In this second case, the existence of border controls with responsibility for human rights and working systems for international protection are needed to reduce to tolerable limits the challenges of this type of migration. However, this can happen in the case of a shared responsibility between countries, therefore through multilateral negotiations and multilateral cooperation to harmonize rules and regulations.

In fact, what is interesting about the link between migration and the Sustainable Development Goals is precisely the mutual penetration and influence in the direction of national-supranational. At the Sustainable

¹ In international documents the usage of the term "illegal" are avoided regarding migrants and migration because of negative connotation and in recognition of the fact that "Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law." (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Art. 6). The United Nations General Assembly requests the United Nations organs and the specialized agencies to utilize in all official documents the term "non-documented or irregular migrant workers to define those workers that illegally and/or surreptitiously enter another country to obtain work"

Context

Development Goals, we have a global agenda that is designed to direct and regulate national action to have a global positive effect for the benefit of all people in the world and on the planet. I.e., the 2030 Agenda is a good example of progress in addressing global challenges. In migration, we see a reverse process: we have a spontaneous movement of people across borders, the regulation of which remains the prerogative of the nation-state and rather leads to the refusal of international cooperation or to problems in multilateralism as an idea. For example, the limited scope of those countries that signed the **Global Compact for a Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM)** can be pointed, i.e. it wasn't the biggest success that the multilateralism could have achieved. Just the same limited success has obtained the **UN International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families** which after its adoption in 1990, has been ratified in 2019 by only 55 despite the fact that the both documents respect the principle of the supremacy of state sovereignty.

The migration is a complex issue for our complex world. It is a result of the uneven development of the countries and the world regions, of growing national and global inequalities, of a poverty. That's why it is crucial to achieve multilateral cooperation in overcoming the underdevelopment and addressing climate changes, ie to build fairer world with decent work everywhere, in line with the principle keeping no one to be left behind. That is the philosophy of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, especially for Goal 17– global

Context

partnership for sustainable development, or for Goal 1 -End poverty in all its forms everywhere, or for Goal 10 Reduce inequality within and among countries. In fact, more or less for each of the all 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

For the eminent **economist**, John Kenneth **Galbraith**, the **migration is „the oldest action against poverty“**. „It selects those who most want help”². Many other authors argue that the labor migration can be an important tool for decreasing poverty³ Therefore, migration can contribute to the achievement of the UN Sustainable development Goals in the entire world and to add more significance to the global comparing to the national context. At the same time, the growing migration waves are easily challenging the benefits of global labor movement. The Unions see threat for the local workforce. Social systems of the richer countries are placed under pressure upon the inflow of young and not qualified enough candidates for support or protection. The less developed countries lose brains, i.e. the most qualified human potential. That is the reason to seek different solutions on international level⁴, because the individual states react with anything else but with higher borders and heavier walls for protection of their own territory and national interests.

² Galbraith, J.K. The nature of mass poverty. Cambridge, Mass. Harvard Univ. Press 1979.

³ Clemensq M.A., L. Pritchett. Income per Natural: Measuring Development for People Rather Than Places. - Population and Development Review. 34/3, 395-434.

⁴ Global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration. Intergovernmentally negotiated and agreed outcome 13 July 2018. Online. Accessible on: https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/sites/default/files/180713_agreed_outcome_global_compact_for_migration.pdf

National context

Despite the fact that under the public views' influence and political populism the Bulgarian government refused to join the Global Compact for Migration, the country develops and implements the principles of a safe and regular migration policy under safeguards for protected human rights: Moreover as, a country acceding to the UN's 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. Being a party of the major international human rights instruments, it has a moral commitment to cooperate "internationally to ensure safe, organized and legal migration, with full respect for human rights and the welfare of migrants, regardless of their status as migrants, refugees and displaced persons."

International migration governance in Bulgaria

In attempt to better define what a good migration governance is, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) developed Migration Governance Framework (MiGOF)⁵. Three principles and three goals have been formulated.

Under framework, a country seeks to ensure that migration is humane, orderly and benefits migrants and society when adhering to the following principles:

- Complies with international standards and protects the rights of migrants;

⁵ Migration governance framework. https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/about-iom/migof_brochure_a4_en.pdf

National context

- Formulates a policy involving the whole government (“whole-of-government” approach);
- Commits partners to handle migration and migration-related problems;

And when striving to perform the following tasks:

Brings the social-economic prosperity of the migrants and society to the foreground;

Effectively addresses the diverse dimensions of crisis mobility;

Ensures that migration is carried out in a safe, orderly and dignified manner

In terms of available standards and observed practices, international standards for the protection of migrants’ rights are observed in Bulgaria:

The government guarantees the protection of human rights of all migrants and refugees on the territory of Bulgaria.

With regard to foreigners arriving at the border, the Border Police applies the provisions of international law, bilateral and multilateral agreements, to which Bulgaria is a party and has undertaken commitments and obligations.

Border Police provides foreigners leaflets in different languages with information of the acting rules and laws, prepared by UN High Commissioner for Refugees, State Refugee Agency, BRC, NGO and others. Contact information is provided with the UNHCR and NGO representation in Bulgaria.

National context

Migrants are given place only temporary in the Specialized home for temporary placement for foreigners until processing of documents is completed;

The Migration Directorate of the Ministry of Interior is working with NGOs to provide weekly legal assistance to those in need. The Ombudsman also monitors the implementation of coercive administrative measures.

If foreigners wish, there is a possibility for daily visits of lawyers. Visible and accessible places have information materials in all languages. The judicial authorities control the legality of any administrative act imposed on foreigners.

All migrants are entitled to non-stop medical assistance in the reception centers and in temporary residential centers, according to a specialized Ordinance;

Language training is carried out twice a week in English and Bulgarian to all foreigners.

The wide inclusion of the entire government and all interested parties approach is applied for the implementation of the migration policy stated by the government in Bulgaria.

By Order №226 from September 10th 2019 the National Council of migration, borders, asylum and integration has been created. Upon its creation, Bulgaria complies with the requirement to create a national mechanism for integrated border governance, laid down by the European legislation. The Chairperson of the Council is the Minister of Interior

National context

Affairs. The bodies of the local government and local administration have representatives in the Council.

The Bulgarian Council on Refugees and Migrations (BCRM) functions successfully – a civil society association, platform for advocacy, lobbying and fundraising for the protection, reception and integration of refugees and migrants in Bulgaria - functions successfully. The BCRM works to strengthen the cooperation between state institutions and non-governmental organizations on national refugee and migration policy and practice. Together with the Bulgarian Red Cross, the BCRM takes care of the resettlement and care of refugees in the host communities, part of the European Resettlement Programme.

Measures against human trafficking

The good migration management includes actions for prevention and combat the contraband of migrants and the uprooting of human trafficking

An inter-institutional approach is applied through the creation of active mechanisms for active interaction between MIA, the State Agency for National Security, Prosecutors' Office of Republic Bulgaria and the State Refugee Agency and others.

The National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking was adopted in 2017. It is aimed at prevention, support and reintegration of victims, offering special care for women and children.

National context

In June 2019, the first secured zone for unaccompanied children started functioning at the Registration and Reception Center of the RRC Sofia - Voenna Rampa.

Bulgaria participates in five Joint Investigation Teams (JITs) with partner services from EU Member States.

- If the trafficking victim resides illegally and is compulsorily accommodated in one of the detention centers under the Directorate of Migration, he or she may be immediately accommodated during the period of reflection at one of the trafficking asylums working in the frame of National Reference Mechanism. According to the Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings Act, such people have the right for temporary residence in Bulgaria during the period of reflection, as well as to receive a psychological assistance.

Integration measures for third-country nationals, including recipients of international protection

At legislative level, sufficient measures have been taken to integrate third-country nationals, including the recipients of international protection.

The National Strategy on Migration, Asylum and Integration (2015-2020) is of particular relevance, and is prepared in the spirit of the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility. The document is focused on the European idea of “turning migration and mobility into positive development factors in economic and demographic plan”. It envisages

National context

cooperation with countries of origin and transit, promoting Mobility Partnerships.

Among the laws that support the implementation of the strategic documents, we can mention the Labour Migration and Labour Mobility Act, adopted in 2016 (LMLM). The Act has been altered twice in the last years (SN, 97/2017 and 24/2018) for decreasing of administrative weight to the employees hiring migrant workers. Access to labor market is eased with the adoption of the Law of Recognition of Professional Qualifications (SN, is.13 from 08.02.2008, last altered with SN, is. 85 from 24.10.2017). It settles the conditions and the order of recognition of professional qualifications, acquired in other countries.

The general trend is the number of the illegally residing third-countries nationals in Bulgaria to grow. This obstacle leads to improvement of the net coefficient of migration – from 2.2. in 2010 to -0.7 in 2019⁶. In order to support this process, measures are taken to stimulate employers and to attract qualified specialists in Bulgaria.

It is important to mention the NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE INTEGRATION OF BENEFICIARIES OF INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION IN BULGARIA (2014-2020), adopted in 2015, though in practice it doesn't function successfully. It replaces the existing refugee integration policy by 2013 on the basis of three-year national programs with the active involvement of the State Refugee Agency and introduces a decentralized

⁶ UN DESA. International migration. Country Profiles. Bulgaria <https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/countryprofiles.asp>



National context

approach in which municipalities play a leading role. The arguments for this change, then, are that, with the increasing flow of refugees, the SAR will not have sufficient capacity, and that good European policies and practices mobilize local authorities to integrate refugees.

Challenges

The difficulties and challenges are most evident in the process of integration of third-country nationals who have received international protection, ie. the refugees.

Some Experts have been talking about „zero years“ in refugee integration since 2014, and report inconsistency and spontaneity in adopting strategic documents and programming. Their main reason is the inconsistency in strategic planning and in practical steps. It has been criticized the decision made in 2017 to shift the responsibility for refugees' integration of to the municipalities without preparing the population, without the municipal administration itself being ready to become involved. Integration does not really happen because of lack of interest and even refusal of municipalities to commit.

The presence of negative public and media discourse that contribute to anti-immigrant sentiment and relevant political resonance must also be taken into consideration. „The aggressive and powerful-sounding public anti-immigrant discourse and the invisibility of rare good integration practices will delay and hinder the integration of refugees for a long time.“

From the studies and analyzes carried out on this project, the mentioned above conclusions are confirmed .

Recommendations

To ensure positive impact of the migration processes

Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals is a task for a wide range of stakeholders, not just the government. In this regard, the main recommendation is to strive for the establishment of a network for cooperation and operational interaction between the widest possible range of actors from state institutions, representatives of local self-government bodies and the non-governmental sector in the process of adaptation and social inclusion of all target groups involved, related to the migration politics in Bulgaria.

To improve the communication channels for attracting foreign students and for ensuring their employment during their studies, including the creation of prerequisites for the most prepared to stay and work in Bulgaria.

To build working women's networks from the communities of migrant workers and to be able to monitor the process of their social integration in Bulgaria, in order to create different prerequisites for the creation of a positive impact of the immigration processes in Bulgaria.

4. To offer purposefully diverse both paid and free courses and programs for migrant women in order to achieve a positive image for Bulgaria and for the opportunities that our country offers for long-term cohabitation and intercultural communication.

Recommendations

To improve conditions for reception and integration::

Providing institutional support for the implementation of the strategic objectives set in the field of integration of beneficiaries of international protection

Improvement of the qualification and sensitivity of the employees in the reception centers and border checkpoints.

Ensuring an environment that protects the human rights and dignity in reception centers.

Improving the educational integration of refugee children through the exchange of good practices between schools and kindergartens that accept a larger number of refugee children.

Active and permanent measures to change attitudes in Bulgarian society through intercultural education and in particular to integrate human rights education and global education topics into educational standards and programs. Improved housing and social policies.

Providing trainings for representatives of the Employment Agency to work with this specific group of job seekers.



Bulgarian Platform for
International Development

Bulgarian Platform for International Development.

Bulgaria, Sofia 1504

67, Dondukov Blvd.

E: bpid@bpid.eu

I: www.bpid.eu



EUROPEAN UNION

This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of Bulgarian Platform for International Development and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union.

This publication is part of the SDGs and Migration – Multipliers and Journalists Addressing Decision Makers and Citizens project which is realized in the framework of the Development Education and Awareness Raising Programme (DEAR).



www.bpid.eu