



Deliverable 8.1 – Policy Briefs Executive Summary

BACKGROUND

In the year 2015, people who are forced to leave their homes due to war, civil unrest, climate change and/or food shortage for the first time exceeds the 60 million marks. According to the UNHCR, over 1 million people reached the European Union mainly via the Mediterranean crossing from Libya to Italy and from Turkey to Greece, while the Western Balkan route is progressively preferred. Simultaneously, the EU is actively externalizing its border control to curb the influx of migrants and deflect its asylum responsibilities. This includes the funding of and signing contracts with partner countries to outsource asylum obligations, such as the EU-Turkey Statement, signed in March 2016. The ITFLOWS project has conducted quantitative and qualitative research and developed the EU Migra Tool with the goal to develop better strategies and instruments among policy makers and practitioners in the field of migration.

ITFLOWS D8.1. is part of Work Package 8 that consists of five thematic policy briefs which contain policy solutions and recommendations for national authorities of the EU Member States, EU institutions, local governments, and international and non-governmental organisations. The policy briefs have been drafted by the ITFLOWS partners with the aim to: 1) better understand the multidimensional nature of migration drivers and the complex interplay between them so as to develop adequate tools for migration governance and management; 2) provide a new understanding of the causes of variation in attitudes towards migrants within the EU so as to develop media and communication campaigns that are geared towards inclusivity and integration; 3) assess the scope and implications of EU policies concerning ‘onward movements’ of asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection across EU Member States with the aim to inform the CEAS reform proposals and the Migration and Asylum Pact in this regard; 4) identify the policy and legal challenges for migrants to access the EU labour market so as to decrease socio-economic forms of discrimination and marginalisation of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees; and 5) highlight the main human rights implications when using migration flow prediction tools for humanitarian purposes and to formulate human rights guarantees for its safe use, where possible.

Policy Brief #1, 'Aligning EU policies to the drivers of migration in origin and transit countries', focuses on the multidimensionality of migration drivers in 'countries of origin and transit'. This brief shows how migration drivers operate in complex ways and, in so doing, challenge the European ambition to target the 'root causes of migration' in departure and host countries in order to alleviate migratory pressure on the EU. Moreover, mixed migration journeys reaching the EU are dynamic, non-linear and fragmented processes and unfold across different contexts connecting countries of departure to the EU. Based on qualitative research conducted by the ITFLOWS consortium and over 90 semi-structured interviews with asylum-seekers and refugees in Greece, Italy and Spain, the brief argues that EU's migration and asylum policy, especially in its external dimension, needs to take into account the multidimensional nature of drivers, so as to adopt a broader approach to migration governance, acknowledging mobility and migration as coping and resilience-building strategies. In this way, it would be possible to re-think the role of 'countries of transit', to expand protection spaces and to make key partnerships with third countries more balanced and sustainable.

Policy Brief #2, 'Root causes and factors contributing to possible tensions within the native population in their attitudes towards immigrants/refugees across European countries', addresses the many different types of attitudes toward immigration. Although often correlated, people do not necessarily hold negative or positive attitudes in all these different areas. This complexity of attitudes towards immigration should be taken into account by policymakers at the EU, national and regional levels, as well as civil society and NGOs. Some determinants of attitudes to immigration matter only for certain dimensions of these attitudes. Understanding what drives individuals to be positive or rather negative towards migrants is crucial for the successful accommodation and integration of newcomers. Policymakers should engage with parts of the population that are still rather conflicted about immigration and their underlying values and characteristics. The findings presented in this brief indicate that regional long-term immigration is positively connected with natives' opinions about immigrants' contribution to their country, but yearly changes in immigration have no effect.

Policy Brief 3, 'Effective relocation policies in light of social and economic realities with a particular focus on the desirability and the feasibility of EU-wide initiatives for the relocation of asylum seekers and refugees', assesses the scope and implications of European Union (EU) policies concerning free movement of asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection in the Schengen area. It compares the restrictive approach to intra-EU mobility embedded in the set of rules and practices characterising the Common European Asylum System (CEAS), particularly those proposed reforms under the European Commission's 2020 Pact on Migration and Asylum, with the free-movement regime applicable to people fleeing the war from Ukraine envisaged in the activation of the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) in March 2022.

Policy Brief #4, 'Effective policies for the socio-economic integration of immigrants to the EU' looks at the integration of mixed migrants entering and residing in an EU Member State as one of the highest priorities of the European Union. In general terms, socio-economic integration aims at making individuals “promoters of their own livelihoods, by fostering their sustainable inclusion in host communities and their contribution to local economies”. However, right now asylum seekers, refugees (recognised and unrecognised) and regular migrants in the EU are at high risk of social and economic exclusion. The lack of integration in hosts societies could lead to the marginalization of migrants and beneficiaries of international protection, which would also have negative impacts for societal cohesion. This policy brief identifies several findings in relation to this matter and presents a set of recommendations for policymakers at the EU, national, regional and local level to address them.

Policy Brief #5, 'Good practices and asylum policy commitments according to human rights' highlights the main human rights implications when using migration flow prediction technologies for humanitarian purposes, to distinguish between different technologies and highlight their different risks and to formulate human rights guarantees for its safe use, where possible. The unsuccessful governance by European countries of the latest flows of refugees and migrants highlighted the growing need for changing the EU asylum laws and policies in light of reliable, timely statistical data on migration, asylum, and arrivals at national borders to improve and plan humanitarian responses, to mobilize necessary resources and allocate funds within the EU before the arrival of migrants. The reliable prediction of refugees and migrants could improve (a) allocation of necessary resources; (b) up to date information sharing among civil society; (c) raising awareness and transparency over the arrival of migrants, changing of the narrative about migrant communities; (d) avoiding excessive burden for Member States at the frontline; (e) improving relocation and fair distribution at national and European levels; and (f) boosting social integration of refugees. The use of migration prediction/forecasting for humanitarian purposes, however, raises several critical questions about human rights violations in case of misuse, data inaccuracy, bias, the misunderstanding of context of use, definitional inaccuracies, and the lack of understanding of the different human rights risks posed by agent-based and AI migration prediction tools. The recommendations made in this brief address these challenges and are designed to support policy makers, NGOs and civil society to prepare humanitarian aid with the help of migration flow prediction tools while ensuring relevant human rights guarantees for migrants and refugees.