

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE SWEDISH

PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE

EU

January – June 2023

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Swedish Presidency of the Council of the EU commences at a time of heightened European cooperation and a renewed commitment by EU Member States to work together on migration management. With the signing of the Joint Roadmap by five upcoming Council Presidencies and the European Parliament in September 2022, the Swedish government has shown commitment to advancing negotiations on the New Pact on Migration & Asylum during its Presidency. At the same time, as the war in Ukraine continues, EU Member States continue to welcome people who have fled Ukraine, shifting the focus to more long-term, sustainable inclusion in European societies.

The three recommendations that the International Organization for Migration (IOM) puts forward to the Swedish Presidency reflect the spirit of cooperation that is needed to ensure safe, orderly and regular migration.

Firstly, promoting regular labour migration channels to the EU can help Member States resolve labour market shortages as well as provide opportunities to migrants and their families. IOM recommends that the Swedish Presidency focuses on attracting talent to the EU, ensuring the protection of migrant workers and their long-term inclusion and integration into European communities. The involvement of all levels of government, civil society and private sector actors is necessary to ensure successful migrant integration and social cohesion in EU Member States.

Secondly, well-functioning partnerships between all levels of government and with non-state actors are also essential when it comes to return management. IOM recommends that the Swedish Presidency adopts an integrated approach to return and re-integration and includes local authorities, local public services and NGOs to increase prospects for the sustainable reintegration of returning migrants in countries of origin, including through green packages. Coordination between all actors involved is also essential to ensure that the human rights of migrants are adhered to throughout the return and reintegration process.

Lastly, close cooperation with partner countries is crucial when it comes to effective climate change adaptation measures. To minimize risks of loss and damage, including displacement, IOM recommends that the Swedish Presidency extends their support to help the most vulnerable countries take preparedness measures in the face of disasters. This support should extend to promoting better access to sustainable finance for those countries most in need and involving affected groups in decision-making processes on climate action.

IOM looks forward to cooperating with the Swedish Presidency during its term and stands ready to offer its support and expertise on the issues pertaining to these recommendations.

IOM RECOMMENDATIONS

- I. Build resilient systems through more effective, adaptable and inclusive mobility pathways
 - Create the structural conditions for migrants to thrive and contribute to society.
 - Promote safe, rights-based, forward-looking, adaptable, and inclusive labour migration channels.
 - Encourage multi-stakeholder and multi-level governance responses to integration and inclusion of migrants in all areas of society.

- II. Promote partnerships and cooperation to strengthen return and sustainable reintegration policies and practices
 - Harness the partnership potential of local authorities and NGOs and reinforce their coordination and cooperation capacity and knowledge in the field of return migration.
 - Promote and foster linkages between the pre-return, return and post-return phases to increase prospects for sustainable reintegration of migrants.
 - Adopt an integrated approach to sustainable reintegration, ensuring that reintegration and development funding follow the needs of individuals, their families and communities of return as well as partner countries.

- III. Support adaptation for the countries and populations most vulnerable to climate change
 - Aid preparedness in countries most vulnerable to climate change to minimize risk of loss and damage, including displacement.
 - Pay special attention to improving the access of the most vulnerable countries and people to sustainable finance for climate change adaptation.
 - Promote inclusive mobilization of the whole of society – especially women, youth, indigenous peoples and migrants, displaced persons – into decision-making processes related to climate action.

I. [Build resilient systems through more effective, adaptable and inclusive mobility pathways](#)

Geopolitical, environmental, and technological global transformations are shaping migration and mobility. European societies are facing a decline in active population and labour force participation, population ageing and changes in the composition of the labour force. The COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine have brought further challenges, which intensify the need to build resilience to future shocks. The future of work and mobility, marked by increased connectivity, shifting skills requirements for greener and more digitalized economies and flexible working modalities need to be better understood. Likewise, effective skills matching mechanisms should be developed to avoid future labour market shortages and robust protection systems should cater to new and more flexible forms of work.

In this context, IOM calls on the Swedish Presidency to promote the creation of structural conditions for migrants to thrive and contribute to society. Safe, orderly and regular migration brings economic and social benefits for communities, employers, migrants and their families. Labour migration increases the share of the working age population and contributes to economic growth when migrants enjoy fair and decent working conditions. Labour migration also supports individuals and families to adapt and cope with the adverse effects of climate change when in-situ adaptation is no longer possible.

IOM therefore encourages the Swedish Presidency to promote safe, rights-based, forward-looking, adaptable, and inclusive labour migration channels. The success of these pathways relies on the involvement of the private sector to anticipate effective skills, and promote sound skills development, matching, and recognition mechanisms. At the same time, it is essential to ensure the protection of migrant workers across supply chains. Multilateral and bilateral labour agreements offer structured frameworks for accessible, time bound and effective labour migration procedures. These frameworks may comprise a series of enabling measures, from the provision of information to employers and workers, including pre-departure orientation, to enhanced recruitment regulation and monitoring, independent oversight, and accessible grievance mechanisms.

Likewise, IOM invites the Swedish Presidency to consider the critical interlinkages between labour and skills mobility and integration policy. Attracting and retaining talent, students and workers, at all skill levels requires sound inclusion and social cohesion policies. The latter include efforts to fight discrimination and promote more accurate, human-centred and balanced narratives of migration that create the conditions for migrants to remain and become active members of society.

Additionally, IOM calls on the Swedish Presidency to promote approaches that address the intersectionality of migrant inclusion in line with the EU Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion. Facilitating access to education, healthcare, employment and housing for migrant workers and the members of their families is not only key to the realization of their fundamental social and economic rights, but also optimizes their contributions.

Furthermore, recognizing integration as a multi-dimensional, multi-directional process involving whole-of-society, IOM recommends the Swedish Presidency to encourage multi-stakeholder and multi-level governance responses to integration. Transitioning from the early reception of those who have fled Ukraine to more sustainable approaches to inclusion and social cohesion requires strengthening the capacities of local communities to welcome newcomers, while ensuring equal access to critical services and livelihood opportunities for all. IOM therefore recommends stepping up efforts to foster meaningful social interactions by engaging and empowering communities more actively to optimize migration benefits.

Finally, IOM invites the Presidency to encourage strengthened local coordination and capacity building of frontline actors who provide critical integration support, while developing structures for enhanced service provision in the medium and long term. IOM has a long-standing policy and operational footprint in supporting inclusion and social cohesion in diverse communities, and looks forward to continuing support to the Swedish Presidency and the EU Member States to drive these efforts forward.

II. [Promote partnerships and cooperation to strengthen return and sustainable reintegration policies and practices](#)

Partnerships and cooperation are essential to return management and migration governance. They depend on the combined efforts of different stakeholders – governmental and non-governmental – at the international, regional, national and subnational levels. Partnerships and cooperation are effective if the perspectives, objectives and priorities of all stakeholders and actors are considered.

Return management is a dynamic area. New actors with different mandates and areas of expertise have emerged in this area to respond to the needs of migrants in increasingly complex and precarious situations. Local authorities, local public services and NGOs are increasingly involved in return counselling and first line support to potential returnees. IOM encourages the Swedish Presidency to harness the partnership potential of these actors and reinforce their coordination and cooperation

capacity and knowledge in the field of return migration. Ultimately, effective partnerships and cooperation can ensure that return interventions adhere to human rights law and standards. IOM offers longstanding experience that can contribute to building the capacity of state and non-state actors in return counselling based on key migrants' rights-centred principles, and to building rights-based, robust and protection-sensitive referral mechanisms.

It is well acknowledged that effective return counselling which considers the individual circumstances of the returnees, their families and communities of return improves chances of successful and sustainable reintegration. To this end, cooperation and coordination between the actors involved in the different phases of return are essential. IOM recommends the Swedish Presidency promote and foster linkages between the pre-return, return and post-return phases to increase the prospects for sustainable reintegration.

To ensure sustainability, reintegration support should go beyond direct assistance to individual migrants. Structural and community-based reintegration are vital to responding to the needs of returnees and of their wider communities. They are also essential to increase engagement, leadership and ownership of actors in countries and communities of origin. Reintegration through the green or blue economy can also minimize the adverse drivers that compel people to leave their homes and build resilience.

IOM invites the Swedish Presidency to adopt an integrated approach to sustainable reintegration, embracing the individual, community and structural levels, and ensure that reintegration and development funding follow the needs of partner countries and are not contingent on other criteria. IOM believes that reintegration support at these levels should also be linked to operational needs, national and local development plans and migration routes. Solid referral systems and partnerships with stakeholders at all levels -- including the private sector wherever possible -- can leverage resources and create more opportunities for returnees and their communities of return. IOM stands ready to continue working with partner countries and capacitate them with the skills, tools and expertise needed for a comprehensive and sustainable engagement in the field of migrant protection, return and reintegration.

III. [Support adaptation for the countries and populations most vulnerable to climate change](#)

The frequency and intensity of natural hazards is increasing with the adverse effects of climate change, and consequently, leading to the escalation of disasters. According to the World Meteorological

Organization's Atlas of Mortality and Economic Losses from Weather, Climate and Water Extremes (1970-2019), there were more than 11,000 reported disasters attributed to climate-related hazards globally, accounting for over 2 million deaths and USD 3.64 trillion in economic losses. Notably, 2021 recorded 23.7 million new internal displacements in the context of disasters, including non-climatic ones. Disaster displacements remain mostly close to home and temporary.

Investing in adaptation measures is key to saving lives and securing a livable future. Effective climate change adaptation can minimize loss and damage but more importantly can avert, minimize and address future displacement due to the adverse impacts of climate change. IOM, therefore, recommends the Swedish Presidency supports preparedness action (e.g. early warning systems, contingency planning, evacuation planning, etc.) in the countries most vulnerable to climate change.

The Working Group II Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Sixth Assessment highlights that adaptation progress is uneven, with increasing gaps between action and what is needed to deal with the increasing risks. Moreover, the largest adaptation gaps exist among lower-income population groups. IOM, therefore, recommends the Swedish Presidency to direct special attention to improving the access of most vulnerable countries and people to significantly scaled up sustainable finance for adaptation, including for addressing migration in the context of climate change and environmental degradation.

Redoubling collective, global efforts to ensure that people are at the centre of our collective actions will be key to effective adaptation. IOM, therefore, recommends that the Presidency strive to promote inclusive, whole-of-society mobilization – especially women, youth, indigenous peoples and migrants – into decision-making processes related to climate action.



International Organization for Migration
Regional Office for the EEA, the EU and NATO
Rue Montoyer 40 – 1000 Brussels – Belgium

Tel: +32 (0) 2 287 7000 • Email: ROBrussels@iom.int

 eea.iom.int

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