

UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL OF THE GLOBAL COMPACT FOR MIGRATION – REALISING HUMAN RIGHTS, DEVELOPMENT AND PARTICIPATION

Demands of civil society organisations to the German Government



UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL OF THE GLOBAL COMPACT FOR MIGRATION – REALISING HUMAN RIGHTS, DEVELOPMENT AND PARTICIPATION

The Global Compact for Migration (GCM) is a milestone in international migration policy. Its adoption in December 2018 is remarkable in several respects: While here, as in many other countries of the world, we see right-wing populist and nationalist forces growing stronger and multilateralism is increasingly losing support, the international community is for the first time agreeing on a common vision of safe, orderly and regular migration, for which it is formulating common guiding principles and objectives. The Compact generally reflects a rights-based understanding of migration that is conducive to development. Here the member states explicitly recognise their duty to respect, protect and fulfil the fundamental rights of migrants – regardless of their migration status. Moreover, the document establishes a direct link to the 2030 Agenda adopted in September 2015 and repeatedly refers to the close connection between mi-

gration and sustainable development. We also welcome the fact that the Compact is participatory in nature. Already during the drafting of the text, a whole-of-society approach was taken that allowed for active participation of civil society and above all also migrant networks.

However, in some aspects the Compact is insufficient, and partly it even falls short of existing standards or good practice in dealing with migration. For example, we regret that it is not convincing enough with respect to non-criminalisation of migrants and those who support them. Also, questions of access to basic services for migrants with irregular residency status are not satisfactorily resolved. And finally, the Compact is unfortunately not legally binding, as it is not a treaty under international law but merely a common framework for cooperation.

SEIZING THE COMPACT'S OPPORTUNITIES FOR GERMANY

Despite existing gaps, we view the Global Compact for Migration as an important opportunity to improve the life situation of migrants and promote sustainable development. We want to seize this opportunity also for the national level. There is a need for action in many places – including for us as civil society organisations. We want to contribute our diverse competencies and experiences to the implementation process in order to work towards tapping the potential of the Compact and overcoming deficiencies. For instance, we feel an obligation to advocate even more strongly in public for a positive understanding of migration that is conducive to development and to actively fight racism, xenophobia and exclusion. Moreover, we want to accompany the implementation process of the German Government and in so doing fulfil a monitoring function as civil society organisations. In the following, we have formulated our expectations and demands to the German Government with respect to the planning of the implementation:

► **We call on the German Government to convey a positive understanding of migration.**

The Global Compact for Migration values migration as a societal normality and a source of prosperity, innovation and sustainable development. This understanding of migration should also characterise the spirit of the implementation and be reflected in the overall strategy at the national level. The goal of German policies must be to reinforce the posi-

tive effects of migration and to convey them to the public. Moreover, the Government must contribute to rendering the discourse on migration significantly more objective and fact-based. We also expect the German Government to act decisively against structural racist discrimination.

► **We call on the German Government to adopt a development-oriented and rights-based implementation plan for Germany.**

The German Government should follow the recommendation of the Global Compact for Migration and develop a concrete implementation plan for the national level. This requires a systematic and transparent survey of the current situation. It would need to clarify which strategies, structures and activities are already contributing to or detracting from the achievement of the goals. This should include all relevant processes, for instance the National Action Plan on Integration, the current return programmes and the forthcoming law on the immigration of skilled workers. Clear goals and time targets need to be defined for the implementation plan. Also, measurable criteria and comprehensible indicators should be identified that allow both the current state and the progress to be assessed in a comprehensible manner. The content of the implementation plan should be oriented towards the 2030 Agenda and the fundamental guiding principles of the Global Compact for Migration. The needs of the migrants and of the societies of origin must be taken into account.

► **We demand a coherent whole-of-government approach from the German Government.**

The objectives of the Global Compact for Migration are phrased very comprehensively. Many policy areas need to cooperate in order to realise them. It is therefore necessary to organise the implementation across departments. Responsibilities must be unambiguously clarified and structurally anchored in the corresponding ministries. Moreover, it is important to establish clearly defined coordination processes between the departments. Further levels such as communities and municipalities must also be included in the implementation. Moreover, the German Government should be seen to act coherently by continuing to advocate for the implementation of the GCM on the international level and supporting other countries in implementing it. We also expect the German Government to strengthen the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) as a place for informal exchange between governments, civil society and private businesses. And finally, it should be determined how and by whom the existing and new processes within Germany and in the framework of its international cooperation are to be brought together. In our view, it would make sense for this process to be under the aegis of the Federal Chancellery.

► **We call on the German Government to include civil society organisations in the entire process on the Global Compact for Migration.**

The participatory character of the drafting process should also be a guiding principle for the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration at the national level. We want to be included already during planning, for instance

in the framework of a circle of advisers. Especially migrant and diaspora associations should be supported in unlocking their manifold potentials for Germany as well as for the home countries. Due to the broad thematic spectrum of the Global Compact for Migration, opportunities for migration should also be offered at the thematic level, for example in the form of workgroups in which politicians and civil society organisations conduct a regular exchange on current processes and best-practice experience.

► **We call on the German Government to regularly report on the progress in implementing the Global Compact for Migration.**

Germany should play an exemplary role in monitoring the progress at the international level. Moreover, we expect that there will also be a clearly defined process with regular progress reviews at the national level. The results should be discussed with civil society. In this context, it is of utmost importance that the entire process for progress review be designed to be transparent and comprehensible.

► **We call on the German Government to secure the financing of the implementation process.**

Germany must make sufficient financial resources available for the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration – for the implementation structure both at the international and at the national level. Countries of the Global South should also be supported in implementing the GCM. And finally, the participatory design of the implementation process in Germany will also incur costs. A separate budget should be established for this in the long term.

The present paper is the result of a broad consultation process within German civil society in the area of migration and development. The actors involved include migrant and diaspora associations, development, humanitarian and human rights organisations, unions and foundations.

The process was coordinated by VENRO and is a key component of the project to coordinate German civil society in the framework of the Global Compact for Migration and the Global Forum on Migration and Development, which is supported by the Bertelsmann Foundation.

VENRO is the umbrella organisation of development and humanitarian aid non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Germany. The Association was founded in 1995 and comprises around 130 organisations. Their backgrounds lie in private and church-related development co-operation, humanitarian aid as well as development education, public relations and advocacy. VENRO's central goal is achieving justice in globalisation, and in particular eradicating global poverty. The Association works towards realising human rights and conserving natural resources.

VENRO

- represents the interests of the development and humanitarian NGOs in the political sphere
- strengthens the role of NGOs and civil society in development policy making
- represents the interests of the developing countries and of poor population groups
- raises public awareness for development topics

**VENRO – Association of German Development
and Humanitarian Aid NGOs – www.venro.org**

IMPRINT

Published by:

**Association of German Development
and Humanitarian Aid Non-Governmental
Organisations (VENRO)**

Stresemannstraße 72
10963 Berlin

Phone: +49 30 263 9299-10
Fax: +49 30 263 9299-99
Email: sekretariat@venro.org
Internet: www.venro.org

Editors: Anke Kurat, Astrid Müller (VENRO)

Layout: dieprojektoren.de

Berlin, December 2018

The project to coordinate German civil society in the framework of the Global Compact for Migration and the Global Forum on Migration and Development as well as the drafting of this paper were supported by the

| **BertelsmannStiftung**