

Synthesis of the External Consultation on the Mid-Term Review of the Thematic Programme “Cooperation with Third Countries in the Areas of Migration and Asylum”, 2007-2013

Introduction

The Thematic Programme “Cooperation with Third Countries in the Areas of Migration and Asylum”, implemented under the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) for the 2007-2013 period, aims to support third countries in their efforts to ensure better management of migratory flows in all their dimensions. A Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the current 2007-2010 Strategy Paper of the Thematic Programme has been launched by the Commission with a two-fold objective: firstly, to assess the extent to which the current Strategy Paper reflects adequately the political priorities and is well adapted to the current international context as regards migratory flows; secondly to help define the Programme’s multi-annual strategy for the period 2011-2013. A public consultation period was initiated on 22 February 2010 with a closure of written responses on 31 March 2010, to allow public authority bodies, organizations and civil society to contribute through comments and remarks to the MTR of the Thematic Programme.

A total of 16 contributions were received from a variety of different contributors, including 2 Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), 1 Research Organisation, 6 International Organisations and initiatives and 8 public authority bodies, as follows:

Type	Number	Name
NGOs	2	Hotline for Migrant Workers; Danish Refugee Council (DRC)
International Organisations	6	International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD); Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE); EC-UN Joint Migration and Development Initiative (EC-UN JMIDI); International Labour Office (ILO); International Organisation for Migration (IOM); United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
EU Member State Government administrations/agencies	7	Sweden; Netherlands; Hungary; United Kingdom; Czech Republic; Lithuania; Romania
Regional governments from EU Member States	1	Andalucía (Spain)
Total	16	

This Synthesis Paper presents an overview of the 16 contributions to this public consultation. The synthesis is organized on the basis of the questions guiding the consultation. Of the 16 contributions received, 14 reacted following the proposed structure, while 2 offered more general comments which have been integrated into the answers to the corresponding guiding questions of this synthesis.

1. Implementing the Five Objectives of the Thematic Programme

Contributions broadly confirm that the five objectives of the Thematic Programme offer a more comprehensive approach to cooperation with Third Countries on migration matters than previous initiatives and are aligned with the overarching objectives of the European Union in the field of migration and asylum.

Over half the contributions emphasize the need to give greater priority to objectives encompassing labour and circular migration and the fostering of synergies between migration and development. Four contributions, from Member States and organizations, share the view that the need to strengthen asylum systems and provide greater protection for refugees should be given priority in terms of number of projects and funding allocated. A similar number of contributions underline the importance of tackling irregular migration and trafficking and smuggling of human beings.

Finally, a number of organizations and Member States consider the thematic objectives to be inappropriately balanced. They call for a more coherent choice of projects and for the allocation of funding, both thematically and geographically, to improve the effectiveness of the Thematic Programme.

The dominant focus on the Southern and Eastern migratory routes and their relevant priority objectives, at the expense of other regions such as Asia, Latin America and the Middle East, seems to be well accepted by most public authorities of EU Member States but it is criticized by most of the other stakeholders.

2. Linking the current strategy of the Thematic Programme and the external dimension of the EU migration and asylum policies

Most contributions welcome the coherence of the Thematic Programme's strategy with the objectives of the Global Approach to Migration and the external dimension of EU migration and asylum policies. The strategy is considered to fit relatively well with the policies and agendas of the European Pact, the Hague and Stockholm Programmes and the European Consensus for Development.

Nonetheless, developing the Strategy's alignment with the objectives set by other important EU programmes and funding instruments needs also to be taken into consideration.

The need to enhance consistency with other EU policy areas for a more comprehensive Strategy is strongly supported by most contributions. Contributors agree that the Thematic Programme's Strategy should not overlook EU policies in other areas such as, in particular, education, employment, social policies and environment, as these may have implications on cooperation with third countries.

Public authorities, as well as non-governmental and international organizations, recognize that there is room for improvement regarding the visibility of the links between the aforementioned European initiatives and the Thematic Programme Strategy.

3. Evaluating the appropriateness of the “Migratory Route” concept

The concept of ‘migratory routes’ is considered a relatively useful and relevant synthesis of migration realities by a majority of contributors. Some support is given to the geographical focus of these routes, which appears in line with the Strategy's priorities. This position is particularly emphasized in contributions from public authorities whose country may behold specific interests in a particular migratory route.

However, a number of contributing organizations and countries argue that this concept remains somewhat limited as it does not fully fit all aspects of migration and does not sufficiently reflect regional dynamics, fast changing migratory patterns, as well as the increasingly prevalent South-South dimension of migration. Various contributions emphasise that the geographical focus of the migratory routes falls short of fully encompassing all challenges of international migration. Overall, these share the view that the concept of ‘migratory routes’ should be more flexible to adapt to the evolving nature of migration dynamics and realities.

4. Subsidiarity and complementarity of thematic and geographical instruments

It is broadly accepted that aligning the objectives of the Thematic Programme with those of the geographical programmes by including more often migration matters as a CSP or RSP objective, would ensure a more systematic focus on migration management priorities.

More than half of the contributions argue that the short-term emphasis of Thematic Programme projects, in contrast with the long-term approach of CSPs and RSPs, offer a more adapted approach to the evolving nature of migration realities. It is important to ensure that the multi-annual framework in which the Strategy applies does not dilute the nature and added value of the Thematic Programme's objectives.

Combining the country and region-specific approaches of CSPs and RSPs with a more global framework for the Thematic Programme Strategy is considered by some contributors to offer a more comprehensive approach to migration by stretching it beyond the national and regional boundaries of CSPs and RSPs.

5. Setting thematic priorities

A majority of contributions support the view that the next Strategy cannot overlook thematic priorities such as the fight against human trafficking, support to unaccompanied minors, remittances, circular migration schemes or readmission and reintegration measures, and the emergence of new concerns such as the impact of climate change on migration, the implication of the financial crisis for migratory flows and gender-based effects on migration issues. However, most contributions also stress the importance of keeping a flexible instrument capable to adapt easily to changing priorities and needs and to address emerging phenomena.

Support to and cooperation with instruments such as Mobility Partnerships, Regional Protection Programmes and Regional Cooperation Platform is regarded highly by a number of contributions as a means of adapting the Strategy to the instruments of the Global Approach and to regional dynamics of migration. Various comments also suggest to better target support to specific civil society actors and local authorities on the ground.

However, a small number of comments warn of the negative impact of incorporating new issues and increasing support for other instruments and programmes, which may result in breaking down funding and priorities and creating an excessively constraining framework for the Thematic Programme. Accordingly, if further issues are included and greater support is sought for cooperating instruments, a more regular evaluation is recommended.

6. Combining Call for Proposals and Targeted Projects

A majority of Member States and organisations agree with the current balance between targeted projects and ones awarded under the call for proposals. The satisfactory results of the Call for Proposals are welcome throughout a majority of contributions. Nevertheless, a number of shortcomings regarding projects awarded under the Call for Proposals are underlined. Some comments suggest that the effectiveness of certain projects can be negatively affected by the lengthy application process of the Call for Proposals. The Call for Proposals is also criticized for not allowing sufficient follow-up of certain projects. Finally, it is suggested that granting rules such as setting the budget threshold at or above €0.5 million may prevent smaller organizations from participating in the Call for Proposals.

Certain contributions propose that increased opportunities for targeted projects be made possible through a more balanced allocation of funds. The long-term framework of targeted projects allows building strong partnerships and stronger levels of coordination and consultation. A small number of Member States argues that increasing opportunities of targeted projects would ensure cooperation in particular areas of interests for the EU and Member States in particular. Contributions made by organizations emphasise that

better targeted and more effective programme delivery through targeted projects will enhance cooperation with international organizations.

7. Consultations and Coordination

Contributions share a common position that donor coordination needs to be improved. Greater coordination and consultation at European and Member State levels should encourage a better alignment with the priorities and strategies of main stakeholders in the field – i.e. EU Member States and partner countries.

Member States and organizations agree that improved coordination and consultation should work towards increasingly involving partner countries and developing greater synergies amongst Member States carrying out cooperation activities bilaterally. Common evaluations of needs and priorities, as well as more efficient information sharing are suggestions for improvement.

A number of contributions consider coordination and consultation to be unequally balanced: while relatively good at a European level, improvements are needed at field level through greater involvement of European Delegations. These Delegations should be playing an important role in contributing to bilateral initiatives and coordinating European efforts with Member States' bilateral cooperation in the field.

8. Visibility of the Thematic Programme

All contributions support the argument that the visibility of the Thematic Programme needs to be perfected to highlight its links with broader policy aims.

Member States share the view that efforts to increase the visibility of the Programme exist, but insist that the dissemination of information could be improved, especially by civil society. These efforts will raise European awareness of migration issues and of European involvement abroad amongst European citizens. A variety of contributions agree that EU funding, in particular, should be made more visible, especially amongst the European population.

International Organisations, amongst others, underline the need to increase visibility of the Thematic Programme at the level of beneficiary countries. The need to improve understanding of the wider context of the Programme in partner countries is emphasized. Accordingly, the role of European Delegations is viewed as important in enhancing the transparency and visibility of the Thematic Programme in countries where projects are taking place.

Next Steps

This consultation will provide input for the definition of the Strategy document of the Thematic Programme for the period 2011-2013.

A draft of this Strategy Document will be submitted for opinion to EU Member States and to the European Parliament by the Summer 2010.

List of Contributions received on 31 March 2010

Non-Governmental Organisation

- Hotline for Migrant Workers
- Danish Refugee Council

International Organisations

- International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)
- Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)
- EC-UN Joint Migration and Development Initiative (EC-UN JMIDI)
- International Labour Office (ILO)
- International Organisation for Migration (IOM)
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Member States

- Sweden – Ministry of Justice
- Netherlands – Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Hungary – Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- United Kingdom – UK Border Agency
- Czech Republic – Ministry of Interior
- Lithuania – Permanent Representation of Lithuania to the EU
- Romania – Permanent Representation of Romania to the EU

Regional Government

Andalucía (Spain) – Ministry of Employment