



## **A call for the respect of human rights and for European solidarity with migrants and refugees**

**Brussels, 18 december 2023**  
**Secretariat of COMECE**

On the occasion of the International Migrants Day celebrated on 18 December, COMECE wishes to express some underlying principles that should guide the ongoing trilogue negotiations on the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum. These principles should orient the policy makers to put in place legislations and mechanisms that ensure a fair, just and humane treatment of every regular or irregular migrant or asylum seeker arriving at EU borders, at any stage of procedures.

Migrants and asylum seekers are not numbers, but real people that deserve our generosity, solidarity and support. The negotiations offer a unique opportunity for the EU and its Member States to advance the cause of humanity, faithful to our values and respectful of international commitments.

On this day, designated to recognise the important contribution of migrants and the challenges they face, we would like to encourage EU policy makers to formulate human-centered migration and asylum EU policies, putting into practice the four verbs proposed by Pope Francis: welcome, protect, promote and integrate.

In view of shaping this vision into action, we wish to propose to the EU institutional negotiators the following policy recommendations:

- to fully preserve the access to asylum as a fundamental human right for anyone in need of international protection and to treat in a humane way any person that comes to our borders;
- to offer a safe space to those fleeing their countries due to persecution or war;

- to exercise concrete solidarity among Member States for a better management of the influx of asylum seekers and migrants at the EU external borders;
- to ensure that the identification of third-country nationals approaching EU borders – a legitimate right of every State to protect its own communities and citizens from any potential threat and danger - is conducted in line with an approach that puts at its core the dignity of every person;
- to implement a larger number of safe and regular channels that would not only improve migratory flow management but also reduce irregular migration and the overburdening of border controls;
- to guarantee the right to access asylum under just conditions, including: legal advice, the right to appeal, sufficient time to examine properly each individual claim, a limited and proportionate use of detention, the respect for the unity of migrant and refugee families, tailor-made border controls for individuals and families in more vulnerable situations, a particular care of families with children and of unaccompanied minors, facilitating their reunification with their respective families, and a monitoring mechanism for fundamental rights at the external borders:
- to provide a safe and dignified accommodation throughout the duration of legal procedures. While acknowledging hosting countries' constraints in accommodating migrants, we urge the avoidance of solutions that might lead to the establishment of camps with perilous conditions.

In recent months, the Ukrainian refugee crisis has set a high standard for the welcoming of refugees in the European Union. It has become a leading example of the generous capacities deployed by States and societies in Europe to protect individuals and families seeking asylum.

We call on and encourage the institutions of the European Union and the Member States to conclude a fair and just agreement on the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum under negotiations and to base it on the above-mentioned principles.