



**Informal consultations on the zero draft declaration of the high-level plenary meeting to
address large movements of refugees and migrants**

7 July 2016

Statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States

delivered by

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Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

We are pleased to start discussing the outcome of the 19 September high level event on the large movements of refugees and migrants. The EU and its Member States have a number of initial comments and will come back with more detailed input next week. We will also submit the final version of the statement later today.

Co-facilitators,

We welcome the broad and balanced approach taken in the zero draft of the political declaration and the strong focus on responsibility sharing of the whole international community in the zero draft. Large movements of migrants and refugees are a global phenomenon which requires a coordinated and active international response.

We welcome the definition of ‘large movements’, acknowledging that this will vary depending upon the geographical context, the receiving state’s capacity and the impact of sudden or prolonged movements.

We consider that the final document should be a concise and easily understandable political declaration. This should include further streamlining and restructuring the text, as well as being more precise and coherent on terminology. We also believe it is important to attach to this Political declaration a Global Compact on Responsibility sharing for Refugees, whose

international legal status is already protected by international law, including the 1951 Convention on Refugees and a process to develop a Global Compact for Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration. As the draft develops it will be important to maintain an appropriate balance so as to achieve consensus and ensure not to emphasize one at the expense of the other. We would also welcome further clarity on the aims and the process for negotiating the Global Compact for Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration and recommend that this process is clearly synchronized with other existing processes.

We are pleased to see the zero draft reaffirming existing international conventions and standards on refugees.

We agree that while many refugees and migrants might face similar challenges in the context of large movements, their treatment is governed by separate legal frameworks. We thus support the current structure of the political declaration, differentiating between refugees and migrants. Throughout the text, it will be important to maintain distinctions where these are appropriate.

We stress the need to include readmission and further strengthen the text on return since we are of the view that cooperation on return and readmission forms an important element of a broader and balanced cooperation. In in this regard we recall the need for full and effective implementation of the existing readmission agreements.

Further, the need for good border security as well as registration and identification as part of good migration management should be part of the declaration.

We welcome that the zero draft is clearly linked to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. It acknowledges that the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda addresses many of the root causes of large movements of migrants and refugees. The need to combat root causes, including through education and employment, as well as to build strong partnerships built on mutual trust between countries of origin, transit and host countries, with the use of long term policies and existing processes and programmes, should be better reflected and should be highlighted in the text. The responsibility of countries of origin to create and maintain conditions for their citizens to stay voluntarily and prosper in their home countries should also be mentioned. We would like to see a focus on youth and the need to create the conditions for growth, employment and education, which can contribute to young people becoming drivers of development in their home countries.

We support the call for adequate humanitarian financing and stress the need to strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus, and emphasize the need to assist refugees in their own neighbouring regions. These are elements we would like to see reflected in the political declaration.

We strongly support the global campaign against xenophobia, to be launched by the SG and we believe that the involvement of civil society is pivotal in both assisting refugees and migrants and in addressing the fear and insecurity that uncontrolled movements of people bring about.

We welcome the attention given to persons in vulnerable situations travelling within large movements of refugees and migrants, including women, children, elderly, persons with disabilities, LGBT and others. We should consider alternative wording for "vulnerable migrants" which we can use throughout the text. The text should mainstream gender perspective and acknowledge the disproportionate effect of displacement on women and girls. Considering the particular vulnerability of migrant and refugee children and the special provisions as regards children's rights in international humanitarian and human rights law, we would suggest strengthening the language on children's rights and child protection with the aim to highlight the best interests of the child principle as a paramount consideration. We would also argue that in the context of this Summit attention needs to be given to the position of the more than 40 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

We strongly support the reference to the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms of migrants, irrespective of their status. This does not contradict specific legislation related to conditions for residence of migrants. For this reason, we consider it necessary to have an appropriate reference to the obligation of migrants to respect national legislation of host country, including the legal framework related to migration.

We would also like to emphasize the need to engage the private sector and civil society in efforts to improve conditions for refugees and migrants.

Finally, we would appreciate clarification on the request on an annual assessment of progress made in implementing the commitments of the UN summit on large scale movements of refugees and migrants and whether that will be a separate report from the annual progress report of the UNSG on SDG's.

We will have additional comments on the zero draft and the Global Compact on Refugees next week and look forward to continuing our discussion.