



Polish Presidency of the Visegrad Group
July 2016–June 2017

V 4 Interior Ministers' Meeting

21 November 2016, Warsaw

Joint Statement of Ministers

on establishment of the Migration Crisis Response Mechanism

21.11.2016

We, the Ministers of the Interior of the Visegrad Group, have met in Warsaw on 21 November to discuss the ways forward concerning the current migration crisis and potential policy options to be developed on the regional, as well as EU level. We acknowledge that the current migratory situation of the European Union calls for enhancing cooperation and delivering results-oriented solutions. We strongly believe that these solutions should lead to reducing the influx of illegal migrants into the European Union, allowing us to regain control over the management of mixed migration flows.

To achieve this goal, we need to address root causes of illegal migration to the EU by i) providing assistance to third countries hosting large numbers of migrants; ii) supporting effective processing of asylum claims, including by tackling the phenomenon of the abuse of international protection for the purpose of unjustified illegal entry into the EU; as well as iii) improving return and readmission rates of migrants not eligible for international protection in the EU.

We agree that tools and measures allowing for returns of illegal migrants to their countries of origin or safe third countries, where possible, are the crucial aspect of efficient common EU policies in the field of migration.

Our assessment of the EU's experience in tackling the influx of illegal migrants it has witnessed in 2015 and 2016 leads us to a conclusion that solutions introducing mandatory relocation of migrants, whether based on an *ad-hoc* decisions or a permanent mechanism, cannot be considered as effective measures to address such influx. The EU has shown inability to implement such measures and their introduction has even led to unnecessary divisions among the Member States. Moreover, we are of the opinion that relocation of migrants who do not qualify for international protection constitutes an additional pull factor for irregular migration. For these reasons we must reject mandatory relocations of illegal migrants or a similar permanent mechanism becoming a part of the EU's response to the migration crisis.

We acknowledge that uncontrolled mixed migration movements are a threat to the EU and Member States security. Concerned with the safety of our citizens, we agree that it is a threat that cannot be underestimated.

We believe that sharing of responsibilities under the Common European Asylum System, as well as support provided in accordance with the principle of solidarity, should be based on a voluntary mechanism coordinating Member States support provided in order to enhance asylum systems of those Member States that are affected by a large increase in numbers of asylum seekers.

We are of the opinion that the EU needs to move beyond the proposals dividing EU Member States and that the EU should find an unequivocal solution which should include a viable and constructive alternative to measures imposing relocation of migrants. At the same time, we are committed to support the common European response to migration crisis with result-oriented and effective solutions that bring us closer to achieving our common goals and normalising the migration situation.

We acknowledge that significant results may be achieved by a broad set of measures, such as improving the security of external borders, improving asylum procedures in the points of first entry of migrants, strengthening cooperation with third countries along migration routes, and providing adequate assistance to third countries hosting significant displaced populations.

We further acknowledge the need to restore the rule of international law and to act in accordance with the provisions of European law, in order to protect the EU's external borders, reduce illegal migration and to safeguard the integrity of the Schengen area.

This is why we agree to promote a flexible common policy framework corresponding with the main challenges – a framework built upon the principles of solidarity and full respect for the competencies of Member States. This policy framework should take into account situation in particular Member States, including their difficulties and constraints as well as their capabilities and available resources.

To make our efforts towards the solutions beneficial for the EU at large, we agree to further strengthen our cooperation and develop joint response enabling Member States to react swiftly and adequately to critical situations and to better use of available instruments, tools and resources. Initial discussions on such a response were held during the meetings of senior officials of the Visegrad Group countries in Jugowice on 29-30 August and in Prague on 19 October 2016.

Taking into account the outcome of these discussions and with the goal to contribute to the common solution at the EU level, we have decided to establish a joint Migration Crisis Response Mechanism (MCRM) aimed at creating new or enhancing existing links between the Participating States' governmental institutions responsible for migration. We wish to build a framework that would enhance an efficient coordination among relevant institutions, in order to jointly react to relevant challenges.

We believe that MCRM should establish a network for information exchange and enable Participating States to identify the current needs and outline priorities for coordinated actions. It should facilitate swift and efficient information sharing, as well as enable for identification and training of experts suitable for common EU activities in the affected EU Member States, as well as in third countries hosting a substantial population of migrants.

We will establish focal points and designate coordinators responsible for leading the work on the development of the MCRM, in particular for identification of institutions to be included in the mechanism, devising coordination procedures for the network of those institutions and for further exploring possible areas, modalities and extend of cooperation in each of the MCRM priority areas. The coordinators will develop a detailed action plan for the development of the MCRM and present it to the Participating States by the end of March 2017.

We will work jointly and designate the resources needed to develop MCRM coordination structures and enable it to achieve operational capacity in the shortest time possible. We agree that the costs of establishing and maintaining the MCRM shall be borne equitably by all Participating States who should utilise all possible options to provide adequate resources.

The established Migration Crisis Response Mechanism will be a joint V4 initiative coordinated by Poland, open for all EU Member States willing to participate and cooperate in order to achieve the objectives outlined in this statement.