



Draft report on “on addressing refugee and migrant movements: the role of EU External Action”

Amendments by PLATFORMA

October 2016

Local and regional governments (LRGs) are key actors for development, democratic governance as well as security and migration. They have been increasingly recognized by both the European Union and the United Nations as major development actors. Moreover, thousands of European towns and regions are already implementing projects in cooperation with towns and regions in partner countries. The new Partnership Framework with third countries and the External Investment Plan represent an opportunity to strengthen the EU’s partnership with local and regional authorities in both EU Member States and the target partner countries.

In view of the discussions taking place in the Committees on Foreign Affairs and Development with regards to the report on the role of EU external action in addressing migration, PLATFORMA – the network of local and regional governments for development cooperation between Europe and partner countries- proposes the following amendments in order to strengthen the local dimension:

| <i>Text proposed by the European Parliament</i> | <i>Amendment of PLATFORMA</i> |
|---|---|
| <p>4. Stresses that EU development cooperation should continue to address the root causes of forced displacement by promoting peace, democracy and security, reducing poverty and inequality, strengthening basic services, addressing state fragility and promoting human rights and good governance, in line with Sustainable Development Goal 16 in the new 2030 Agenda;</p> | <p>4. Stresses that EU development cooperation should continue to address the root causes of forced displacement by promoting peace, democracy and security, reducing poverty and inequality, strengthening basic services through effective decentralisation, addressing state fragility and promoting human rights and good governance, in line with Sustainable Development Goal 16 in the new 2030 Agenda; notes that many of these root causes are best tackled at the local level by empowered local authorities and civil societies;</p> |

Justification

LRGs have many interconnected competences. Three are particularly relevant when addressing issues that are at the root of today’s migration crisis:

- **Local economic development:** *Economic development has a strong local dimension because of the weight small and medium enterprises have in a number of third countries as important contributors to economic activity and employment. Local authorities’ policies towards local businesses can play a significant leverage role for a more favourable investment environment.*



- Local resilience to crises: Shocks, natural or man-made, are important push factors for migration, as shown by the ongoing consequences of the Syrian civil war. LRGs are key in reducing the vulnerability of crisis-affected populations and promoting their self-reliance, by improving the delivery of services such as education and health, upgrading slums and deprived urban areas,
- Public administration reform: Local governments, like all stakeholders, need an enabling environment to be able to deliver on their competences. Promoting a comprehensive decentralisation framework, with clear core powers and responsibilities and a transfer of corresponding financial resources, will ensure that local and regional governments in partner countries can carry out their responsibilities effectively.

| Text proposed by the European Parliament | Amendment of PLATFORMA |
|---|--|
| <p>8. Underlines that the resettlement of forcibly displaced persons is a responsibility of the international community; considers it crucial to implement as a matter of urgency a coordinated response in third countries to grant asylum for people in need of international protection, instead of leaving the burden on the front-line states or countries neighbouring conflict zones; highlights the fact that financial support is outpaced by the scope and scale of displacement, compounded by the lack of solutions to address the root causes of this forced displacement;</p> | <p>8. Underlines that the resettlement of forcibly displaced persons is a responsibility of the international community; considers it crucial to implement as a matter of urgency a coordinated response in third countries to grant asylum for people in need of international protection, instead of leaving the burden on the front-line states or countries neighbouring conflict zones; highlights that European and partner countries' local authorities often bear much of the burden of migrant flows and that city to city cooperation can contribute to building their capacity and exchanging best practices in this field; highlights the fact that financial support is outpaced by the scope and scale of displacement, compounded by the lack of solutions to address the root causes of this forced displacement;</p> |

Justification:

The EU approach to migration and crises remains an exclusive “state to state club”, with no hint of supporting city to city or region to region partnerships. This comes despite the fact that Europe’s towns and regions have an established tradition of working with their counterparts in third countries, creating employment opportunities, building local resilience, and improving governance.

In particular, Europe’s towns and regions have ample experience to share with their peers in partner regions on: Building capacity and sharing technical expertise in local management and planning, facilitating integration in host communities, and creating conducive conditions for migrants’ voluntary return.



| <i>Text proposed by the European Parliament</i> | <i>Amendment of PLATFORMA</i> |
|--|--|
| <p>12. Welcomes the new Partnership Framework with third countries as a signal of real political action; stresses that the success of the approach outlined in the communication of June 2016 depends on the EU's capacity to offer real, commonly agreed incentives to third countries and is concerned by the limited offer mainly focused on border management or Assisted Voluntary Return schemes, which – while essential and needed – constitute only a partial response to the situation; highlights the need to balance and complement this response, focusing on the development of local economies, qualification and regional mobility and improved levels of protection in countries of transit and origin;</p> | <p>12. Welcomes the new Partnership Framework with third countries as a signal of real political action; stresses that the success of the approach outlined in the communication of June 2016 depends on the EU's capacity to offer real, commonly agreed incentives to third countries and is concerned by the limited offer mainly focused on border management or Assisted Voluntary Return schemes, which – while essential and needed – constitute only a partial response to the situation; highlights the need to balance and complement this response, focusing on the development of local economies, qualification and regional mobility and improved levels of protection in countries of transit and origin; believes that the governance structures of the Partnership Frameworks should include representatives of relevant non-state actors from third countries, including civil society and local authorities;</p> |

Justification:

The Commission's Communication on the New Partnership Framework makes no reference to what the governing structures of the Framework will look like. Yet this is of crucial importance to ensure the voice of stakeholders such as local and regional governments is heard. This requires a permanent presence for the latter in the governance structure of the compacts with third countries.

| <i>Text proposed by the European Parliament</i> | <i>Amendment of PLATFORMA</i> |
|--|--|
| <p>17. Supports the Commission's proposal for a new and ambitious External Investment Plan (EIP) to mobilise investments in developing third countries; considers that supporting private sectors in third countries while fostering an environment of good governance and business practices should not be presented as a</p> | <p>17. Supports the Commission's proposal for a new and ambitious External Investment Plan (EIP) to mobilise investments in developing third countries; considers that supporting private sectors in third countries while fostering an environment of good governance and business practices should not be presented as a</p> |



| | |
|--|---|
| <p>new measure; calls on the Commission to ensure coherence between financing instruments – for example with the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) and the European Development Fund (EDF) – and projects in order to focus the EU’s assistance on priorities and to avoid the scattering of funds and efforts;</p> | <p>new measure; highlights the need for direct technical assistance to subnational authorities in order to improve the investment environment and the economic governance at the local level; calls on the Commission to ensure coherence between financing instruments – for example with the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) and the European Development Fund (EDF) – and projects in order to focus the EU’s assistance on priorities and to avoid the scattering of funds and efforts;</p> |
|--|---|

Justification:

The External Investment Plan has as one of its three pillars the stepping up of technical assistance with partner to improve the economic governance and the investment environment. However, the Communication makes no reference to local governments as recipients of this technical assistance. This is surprising given that the identification of investment opportunities and the improvement of the investment environment at the local level cannot be done in any meaningful way without subnational governments’ involvement. Moreover, the latter are responsible for ensuring security of property, land planning and local procurement policies, which are essential for an enabling business environment. Local governments should be made structural partners in all three pillars of the External Investment Plan.