



BUREAU OF THE EUROPEAN MIGRATION FORUM

Minutes of the meeting of 30 January 2023

Present

Bureau members:

- **Tina Zournatzi**, European Commission (EC), DG Migration and Home Affairs
- **Paul Soete**, European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), Member
- **Anila Noor**, New Women Connectors
- **Anna Coulibaly**, International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) Europe/ Share Network

Not present: **Rudi Osman**, UEE-Union des Étudiants Exilés; **Yonous Muhammadi**, Greek Forum of Refugees

Staff:

- **Tautvyde Daujotyte**, European Commission (EC), DG Migration and Home Affairs
- **Triin Aasmaa Gomes**, European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)
- **Gemma Amran**, EESC
- **Maria Månsson**, EESC

The purpose of this bureau meeting was to introduce the new members of the bureau, to discuss the feedback survey of the 8th EMF and to propose topics for 9th EMF.

The bureau welcomed Anna Coulibaly and Yonous Muhammadi (who was not present), the elected new members, and did a tour de table. Anna briefly explained her role and organisation.

The EESC gave an overview of the EMF survey results. In all around 1/2 of the participants (76 replies) submitted feedback.

Generally:

- The EMF is considered a unique opportunity and space for CSOs to meet others and EU policy makers.
- Overall, the respondents were very positive of the forum, and commended its organisation.

- Regarding the inspirational story from the Instroom culinary academy, although in general the reactions were positive to its inspiring content, some feedback questioned why this particular story was chosen out of many in the room, and there felt to be an element of tokenisation.
- Overall satisfaction with the keynote speeches was either satisfactory or very satisfactory, the respondents appreciated the Q&A of the keynote speeches, however some felt that there was not enough depth on policy.
- Roundtables were on the whole well-received, some respondents noted issues with timing, structure and moderation for certain roundtables, and not all themes were covered as much as they should have been.
- Overall satisfaction with the session on the outcomes of the roundtables was positive or very positive for 66% of the respondents. It was mentioned that some sessions seemed as just an extension of the roundtable, with no concrete outcomes. In general, more time would be needed to systematically collect the conclusions from the sessions.
- The 'floor is yours' had the most positive feedback, as respondents felt that they can engage in the topics they feel most strongly about.
- 88% of the respondents mentioned that they would like to participate again in the next forum, 11% said that they might want to participate again, for example depending on the topic.
- Regarding how the forum could be improved, some examples were: sharing the participants list beforehand; better structure of the roundtable/moderators and rapporteurs; increasing the diversity of participation such as representatives of different migrant communities and not having the same attendees/organisations every year.
- Suggested topics for the next forum are: vulnerable migrants and refugees; narratives and polarisation; gender, discrimination, respect and anti-racism, stereotypes; elections and the aftermath; safe routes and border management; labour market integration; education, skills and training; meaningful inclusion (the civic and political participation of migrants); policies around migration management, including CSO and policy-maker exchanges.

The floor was opened for discussion. The comments regarding the Instroom academy's inspirational story were well noted by the Commission and EESC, and suggestions for the future would be to invite future participants in the EMF call for interest if they would like to present positive integration stories, as well as having preparatory meetings with particular participants. Other points raised were how to increase media visibility of the forum, as well as attracting the interest to participate also in the few Member States from where usually no applications are submitted (e.g. Slovenia, Slovakia) to reach the geographical representation of all EU countries. The Commission proposed an idea of forming a partnership with a media agency to increase media attention on such a worthwhile event.

The discussion turned to the planning of the forum. The Commission explained that the preparation cycle of the forum is about 10 months and highlighted the key milestones of this cycle, and the importance of involving the bureau from the start of the cycle. The exact date of the 9th EMF will be decided at a later stage.

Possible topics for the next forum were discussed. There was much appetite for the civic participation of refugees and for people with lived experience. Anna noted that more and more municipalities have refugee advisory boards. The EESC mentioned the upcoming opinion on strengthening civil dialogue and participatory democracy, as requested by the Belgian Presidency, highlighting the gaining prominence of CSOs in policy-making.

Other topics suggested are the consultation of the Pact on Migration and Asylum, especially as a lot of the legislation will soon be implemented; safe routes, like providing access to education for

newcomers; linking global commitments such as the pledges from the Global Refugee Forum to the regional and local level.

The final point on the agenda raised the idea of how to better keep participants in touch with one another from one forum to the next. The Commission proposed webinars, which could either focus on a particular theme, or invite a couple of CSOs to propose their projects, via "speed-pitching". A pilot project would be floated, with Anila saying she could help to facilitate it. It was agreed that this would be a team effort and it is to be seen how this fits in with the EMF cycle.

The meeting concluded that the next bureau meeting will take place physically after the consultation with NGOs for the 9th EMF. The secretariat will keep the bureau informed of the date.
