



## **BUREAU OF THE EUROPEAN MIGRATION FORUM**

Minutes of the meeting of 9 June 2016

### **Participants**

#### **Bureau members**

- **Irini Pari**, European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)
- **Laura Corrado**, European Commission (EC), DG Home Affairs
- **Yonus Muhammadi** (Greek Forum of Refugees), Bureau member representing civil society organisations at national level
- **Saïd Elouizi** (Maison des Migrants), Bureau member representing civil society organisations at national level
- **Annica Ryngbeck** (Social Platform), Bureau member representing civil society organisations at European level
- **Michele Levoy** (PICUM), Bureau member representing civil society organisations at European level – replacing **Kadri Soova**

#### **Staff**

- **Justyna Głodowska-Wernert**, European Commission (EC), DG Home Affairs
- **Valeria Setti**, European Commission (EC), DG Home Affairs
- **Barbara Walentynowicz**, European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)
- **Annemarie Wiersma**, European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)

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#### **1. Evaluation of the 2nd meeting of the Forum**

Annica Ryngbeck appreciated the participatory method, but said that the purpose of the various elements had to be better explained to the participants. She suggested involving CSOs in the preparation of workshops and considering asking them to be part of the hosting team and facilitate some workshops. Annica noted the discrepancy in the evaluation by national and European level NGOs. National NGOs appreciated the opportunity to network, while European NGO networks expected more space to influence ongoing EU processes, especially as the European Commission's Communication on legal avenues was published the same day as the Forum without being foreseen for the agenda (only addressed by participants in the open space).

Laura Corrado also appreciated the method and asked for it to be used again during the next edition of the Forum. Both she and Irini Pari did acknowledge there would be room for

improvement, among others as regards the cooperation with the hosting team.

Younous Muhammadi asked for the communication ahead of the Forum to be improved. He also said that there should be more real dialogue between the participants and the institutions, allowing the former to have a bigger influence on policy-making. As far as participants were concerned, he stressed the importance of involving sufficient migrant-led and grassroots organisations.

Saïd Elouizi, who has good contacts with many grassroots organisations, said that it is important to create links and networks that are all-inclusive to foster a sense of ownership among smaller organisations. Many organisations currently find it difficult to become part of organised civil society.

Younous Muhammadi suggested involving the media more, to help raise awareness of the Forum and the topics it discusses and thereby possibly contribute to changing the narrative on migration. He also informed the other Bureau members that one election candidate had sent him an email contesting the election results. The secretariat had not received this email and asked for Younous to send it to them.

Upon request from Annica Ryngbeck, Annemarie Wiersma explained the process used to select participants. Annica Ryngbeck asked to revise the registration requirement to allow for civil society actors to apply although they do not belong to an organised and established organisation. The other Bureau members said this could be considered.

Michele Levoy also appreciated the participatory format, but said that hosts should in the future have more experience with the topic of the event. This would probably make them more receptive to suggestions to modify the script of the workshop throughout the event if this would improve the quality of the debate. Future events might benefit from a presentation on the state of play in a particular policy area at the beginning of the event. Some participants had said that the opening session could be more formal, but it was not clear if everyone agreed.

She also said that mixed groups had turned out to generate interesting discussions and output; in particular the participation of member state representatives in the workshops (during which they spoke freely) had proven to be very valuable.

EESC and EC staff mentioned the key points that came up during the debriefing with the EC hosting team. Challenges and points for improvement that had been identified were, *inter alia*, the quality of the reporting and how to ensure output is useful, interesting to a wide audience and reflects various needs and expectations.

Annica Ryngbeck pointed to the Fundamental Rights Forum, organised by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, as a good source of inspiration when it comes to using participatory methodology ('Participatory Leadership').

As regards "harvesting" from the participatory workshops at the next Forum, it would be useful to accompany general outcomes by some examples of best practice.

## 2. **Reflection on the 3rd meeting of the Forum: possible theme, format, date and timing**

There was an open reflection on the possible themes for the next Forum meeting.

Laura Corrado provided the EC view on the broad topic categories that had resulted from the topics proposed by participants in the online survey. Implementation of the recently adopted EU Action Plan on Integration could be one of the proposed topics.

Saïd Elouizi underlined that whatever topic was chosen, the goals of the meeting needed to be clear. It would be important to ensure a proper focus to allow for effective follow up activities and to have continuity between Forum meetings. A possible focus area could be integration and involving society into that process.

Annica Ryngbeck distinguished two possible approaches to choosing a topic for the next Forum, namely an agenda-setting topic (ie. new topics, such as undocumented migrants or new narrative on migration) and subjects through which the Forum would influence work that is already on the policy-agenda. The latter could include implementation reviews or funding-related debates. An example was assessing the implementation of the EU Action Plan on Integration.

Yonous Muhammadi said that the topic needs to be focussed and not too broad. He pointed out that the number of undocumented migrants in Europe is likely to increase sharply and that it might be appropriate to devote attention to that. Other topics he considered important were the recognition of qualifications of refugees and integration in general.

Michele Levoy suggested it could be interesting to identify challenges to existing legal channels, aiming to produce an overview of the gaps in the legislation in different fields. Whatever the theme, the Forum should ensure to capitalise on the knowledge of CSOs.

Irini Pari was interested to focus on changing the narrative/discourse about migrants and migration, discussing ways of positively influencing the views of the public on the matter, including the role of media. The idea to assess how integration measures are implemented in practice was also found interesting.

It appeared that participants were interested in talking about funding, while the topic was not considered to be suitable to dedicate an entire Forum to. It was suggested to set up a market stand at the next Forum where participants can obtain information about funding from EC colleagues specialised in this matter.

### 3. **AOB**

The next Forum Bureau meeting will take place early October. The Secretariat will propose some timeslots for the next Bureau meeting (meanwhile, they have proposed Fridays 7 Oct and 14 Oct).

This Bureau meeting will be preceded by a written consultation among civil society organisations (to be launched early September), as well as a meeting to discuss the outcome of the written consultation, on the same day as the Bureau.