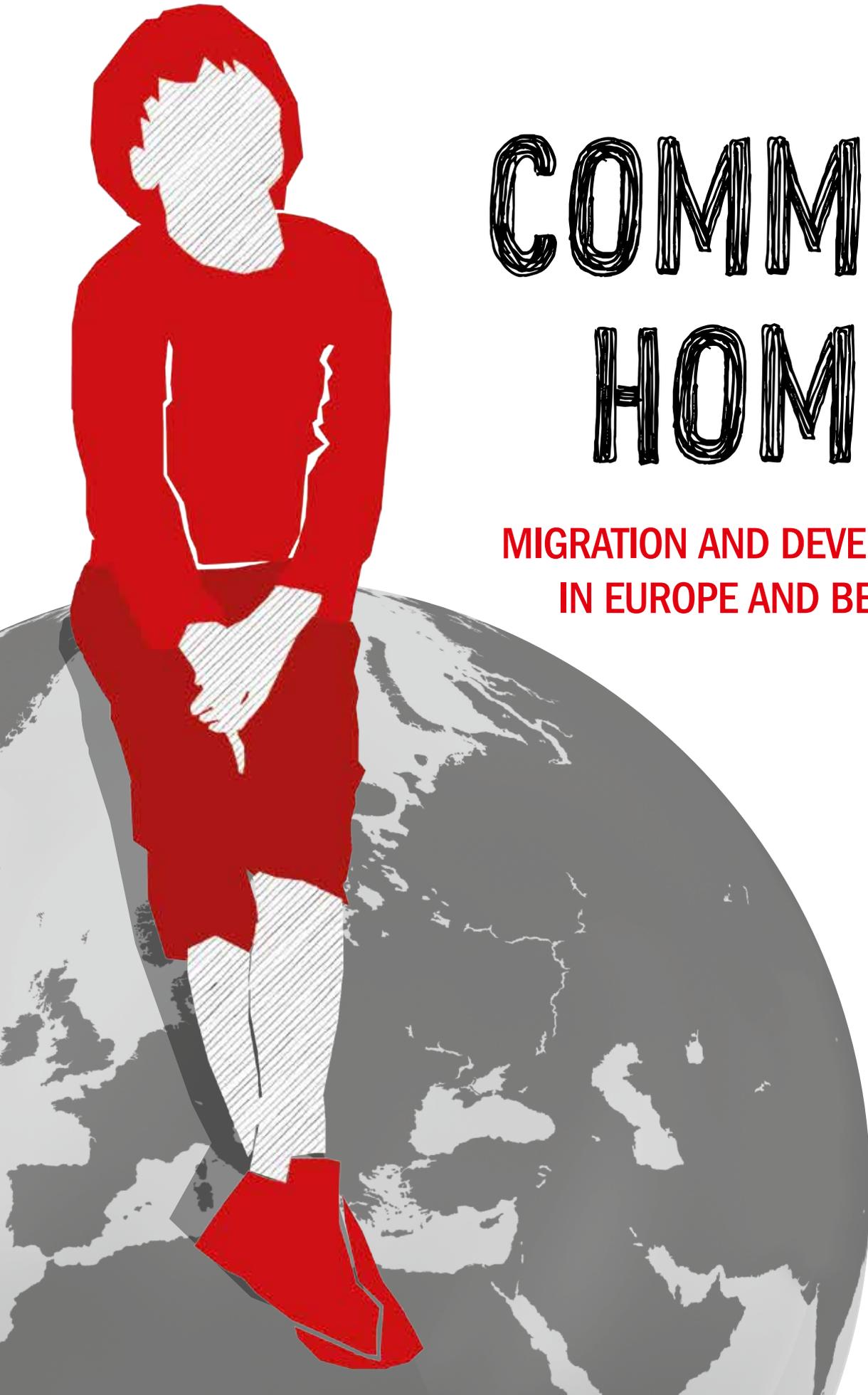


COMMON HOME

**MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT
IN EUROPE AND BEYOND**



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For more information about MIND follow the campaign: <https://www.caritas.eu/whatishome/>



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the last few years, migration has deeply polarised public debate in Europe. While the record number of migrant arrivals has considerably dropped since 2017, the ensuing political and social crisis in Europe remains today. It is in this climate, fraught with tensions and mistrust, that Caritas Europa launched a renewed reflection on the complex interconnections between migration and development, both in Europe and overseas, in order to promote a more balanced debate.

As described in Chapter 1, this publication is based on the findings, testimonies and good practices of 11 Common Home studies,¹ covering Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany (Bavaria), Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Sweden, and on the analysis of European and international statistical databases and the review of secondary literature. Caritas approaches migration and development from two angles. On the one hand, it analyses the extent to which migration itself does and may contribute to sustainable development in countries of origin and destination. On the other hand, it examines the extent to which European and Member State policies and practices, both internally and externally, contribute to the integral human development of people and the sustainable development of countries in Europe and beyond. A critical assessment of what has been done and what should be done in these domains in order to create structures and policies that foster integral human development and that support the development potential of migration are also presented in this publication.

As detailed in Chapter 1, Caritas uses a broad understanding of migration, inclusive of all those who are refugees and applicants for international protection as well as migrant workers and members of their families. As regards development, Caritas views it as the long-term process of building up community and household social and economic capacities in a sustainable manner, in order to eradicate poverty and vulnerability, and to promote social justice. Key to Caritas' vision is the concept of integral human development, which places the human

person at the centre of the development process. Integral human development is defined as an all-embracing approach that takes into consideration the well-being of the person and of all people in seven different dimensions: 1) social, 2) work, 3) ecological, 4) political, 5) economic, 6) cultural, and 7) spiritual.

In Caritas' view, migration remains linked to poverty inasmuch as poverty is understood as not only economic poverty, but also encompasses exclusion or the lack of opportunities to participate in society or to access decent work, good governance, education and healthcare, freedom of expression and participation, or the ability to avoid the consequences of climate change. Caritas thus supports the view that there is no proven correlation between poverty eradication and reduction of migration, and further contends that although some of the drivers of migration need to be addressed to support the long-term development of the countries, poverty reduction is in itself not a migration-reducing strategy. For Caritas, the solution therefore is to facilitate integral human development. Both people who migrate and those who remain - whether in country of origin or in country of residence - have the right to find wherever they call home the economic, political, environmental and social conditions to live in dignity and to achieve a full life. Hence, rather than focus on stopping human mobility, governments should prioritise development policies that create environments, enabling people to achieve their full potential, their life project, their integral human development.

¹ The national Common Home studies highlight how migrants contribute to integral human development in different European countries and in migrants' countries of origin. Each study also identifies specific barriers and obstacles, as well as opportunities and promising practices that affect migrants' ability to contribute to integral human development in the place where they settled and their place of origin. The national studies draw on extensive empirical data, national literature reviews and cross-sectional expert stakeholder reviews.

Contributions to countries of destination

There are multiple ways in which migration and migrants contribute to integral human development in countries of destination and in Europe more generally, as described in Chapter 2. With respect to the economy, **in all countries under review migrants play a crucial role through employment, job creation and innovation**. This is particularly important in countries with strong emigration and negative demographic trends (Bulgaria, Slovakia, Portugal, and Italy) but also in more dynamic countries such as Germany, Netherlands, Belgium, and Sweden. In most countries, migrants are overwhelmingly present in low-skilled sectors (agriculture, construction, manufacturing, small-scale commerce), but their presence in high-skilled and high-tech domains (research, IT, medical professions) is growing. **Migrant entrepreneurship is vital to create new services and consumption demands**. Contrary to popular perceptions, which generally focus on remittances leaving European countries, all the countries object of the Common Home studies receive significant financial inflows. In the case of Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Italy, Slovakia, Slovenia and Portugal, more money is remitted in the country by emigrants than sent out by immigrants, contributing to economic growth and sustaining local consumption. **Migrants generally also contribute to social protection systems more than what they take**, defying the common perception of migrants as free-riders and welfare exploiters. Regarding cultural and societal impact, this publication highlights **several domains and ways in which migrants enrich European societies**, from gastronomy to arts and literature, from sports to music. Such impacts are more marked in older countries of immigration, such as in Austria, Belgium, Netherlands, and Germany, but they begin to be visible in Italy, Portugal, as well as in Eastern European countries. Political contributions remain fairly limited overall due to the sometimes difficult requirements for obtaining citizenship and voting rights.

Barriers in countries of destination

In spite of these notable contributions, migrants frequently face challenges in realising their full potential. Chapter 2 identifies a number of **barriers that threaten migration's development potential and have a negative effect** on European commitment to facilitating integral human development in Europe. For instance, within the context of Europe, **rising public hostility and negative attitudes towards migrants** and migration, fuelled by irresponsible, populist politicians and often the media, has led to an impasse both at national and European levels, blocking pro-migrant legislative actions. This divisive rhetoric has legitimised attacks on migrants'

rights, the criminality of solidarity, as well as discriminatory practices across Europe. It seems in current public debate that any contributions migrants make are either undervalued or ignored. Furthermore, many of the barriers that inhibit the development potential of migration and migrants in countries of destination typically relate to the **overall insufficient economic, social, cultural and political inclusion of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers**. As described in Chapter 2, examples of these barriers include: a lack of access to and inclusion in the labour market; a lack of access to social provisions; limited social participation and political inclusion; and partial rejection or fear of migrants' perceived "otherness". In allowing discrimination, in creating social and economic marginalisation, in pushing people 'outside of the system', and in breeding resentment amongst newcomers, certain policies and practices ultimately contribute to weakening the potential of migration to contribute to the sustainable development of Europe. Additional EU-level barriers are identified, including the securitisation of migration; insufficient progress on legal migration; insufficient protection of the rights of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants; stalled reform of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS); and concerns about EU funding goals and priorities on migration, asylum and integration in the upcoming MFF.

Opportunities in countries of destination

Against these barriers, there are also many positive experiences. Chapter 2 outlines some of the main **opportunities identified in the countries of destination** object of the 11 Common Home studies that facilitate migrants' integral human development in Europe. General opportunities based on existing legal frameworks for the protection of the rights of migrants and refugees is one example. Another is building on new policy frameworks such as Agenda 2030, the Global Compact on Migration, and the Urban Agenda. Others include practices fostering social and inter-cultural dialogue, integration policies and practices at work, policies and practices fostering the social inclusion of migrants, and practices that seek to foster the participation of migrants and/or of migrant and diaspora organisations in social and political affairs.

Contributions to countries of origin

In the same way as migrants contribute to countries of destination, they also make **important contributions to countries of origin outside of Europe**, as described in Chapter 3. This is most visible in the growing **flow of remittances to countries of origin**, which may be used by migrants' households for productive activities as well as for sustaining household consumption patterns or fulfilling basic necessities (education, healthcare, and food). But it does not stop there. Migrants, individually and collectively, also promote development in countries of origin through '**social remittances**' – e.g. **skills - and knowledge transfer**. In addition, **migrant and diaspora organisations also engage in some international cooperation activities**, often in partnership with the private sector and/or local civil society and with the support of the institutions of the country of destination.

Barriers in countries of origin

Despite these contributions, a number of **key barriers limit the development potential of migration and migrants overseas**, as is described in Chapter 3. The **barriers limiting the development potential of migration** in this publication mainly refer to Europe's lack of commitment on opening regular migration channels, insufficient progress on African regional mobility, the lack of enabling environments (including high cost of remittances) in countries of origin, and only limited involvement of diaspora/migrant groups in development processes. The challenges to achieving sustainable development focus instead on the **barriers limiting the added value of European ODA**, including, among others, the inflation and securitisation of aid, mainstreaming of migration in development policy, the lack of policy coherence, and the problematic role of the private sector. Ironically, some of these policies - including on trade, security, climate change or migration management, among others, - rather than addressing the 'root causes' and reducing migration to Europe, actually contribute to creating the conditions for increasing irregular migration movements. Ultimately, **these challenges are found to inhibit migrants' integral human development**. Some other barriers include insufficient progress on African regional mobility, the lack of enabling environments (including high cost of remittances) in countries of origin, and the still limited involvement of diaspora/migrant groups in development processes in countries of origin.

Opportunities in countries of origin

Nevertheless, opportunities for migrants' development potential to flourish in countries of origin, as well as to ensure that European governments and institutions contribute to sustainable development both in Europe and beyond, are also identified. Chapter 3 underscores the **potential policy and practical opportunities that may promote and foster sustainable development and enhance the development potential of migration in countries of origin outside of Europe**. With respect to the first aspect, this chapter reiterates the importance of Agenda 2030 to guide the EU's external action, but also adds the Policy Coherence frameworks, the EU-ACP and MFF negotiations, as well as virtuous practices in private sector engagement. With respect to enhancing the role of migration in development, Chapter 3 also underlines the potential of the Global Compact on Migration, the Global Skills Partnership of Migration, the strengthening of African regional mobility as well as innovative projects on diaspora involvement in development processes. Moreover, some lessons to be learnt from NGOs' and other organisations' promising practices on the ground are described.

Ultimately, the combination of these various dimensions (i.e. the internal vs. external, country of destination vs. country of origin, barrier vs. opportunity) exemplify the interconnection between migration and development - both in policy and in practice on the ground. This alludes to the **complexity of the so-called nexus between migration and development** and leads to the conclusions and identification of five main findings, described below and presented in Chapter 4, that are the result of a deeper analysis of the commonalities in the 11 national Common Home studies identified as key concerns in all the countries.

Main findings

① **A longer-term, global approach to migration is needed that includes inclusive integration models, while also taking seriously the concerns of native populations.**

Integration and broader social policies are key policy domains that influence the role of migration in contributing to sustainable development and migrants' ability to realise their integral human development. Moreover, EU institutions actually have a mandate to provide incentives and to support Member State actions aimed toward promoting the integration of third-country nationals (European Commission website, n.a.a). Promoting the inclusion of migrants and refugees through robust integration policies is essential, not only for unlocking the full potential of migration but also for pursuing a sustainable development agenda universally. Member

States nevertheless continue to face numerous setbacks toward achieving this. One major challenge is the perceived competition between marginalised local populations and the visible migrant population supposedly competing for scarce material resources. This situation is more broadly linked to structural changes taking place both in Europe and globally, from the casualisation of work and the restructuring of economic production (delocalisation, sub-contracting, etc.) to the retreat of the welfare state in many European countries, as described in Chapter 2. These structural changes have had devastating effects on the well-being of many Europeans. Consequently, the politicisation of migration in the European context and the obsession with fighting against irregular migration is generally contributing to eroding the rights of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers as they become the easy scapegoats for all the societal ills. For migration to truly benefit everyone, therefore, integration policies must be linked to general social and economic policies targeting the rest of the population, particularly in support of the most disadvantaged communities. It is expected that such an approach would further work to disarm populist narratives pitting poor communities against migrants, which leads to the second finding.

② Rising hostility towards migrants erodes social cohesion in Europe and inhibits the recognition of migrants' contributions to countries of destination and countries of origin.

In the age of social media and post-truth politics, exploiting media sensationalism and online disinformation, irresponsible populist politicians and governments have instrumentalised migration to gain popular support and to win national and local elections. In the current polarised political climate, migrants and refugees are invariably framed as a problem, either as a threat to European economy, identity or security or, at best, as passive victims in need of help, with the result that their contributions to European development are dramatically undervalued. Moreover, the Common Home studies (backed by other research) identified public hostility, xenophobia and violence targeting migrants and refugees as a major barrier hampering migrants' integral human development, both at the national and European levels. The toxic mix of populist nationalist politics, negative and biased media messaging and frustrated public opinion – much of which has been hurt by years of economic crisis, neoliberal labour and social policies, and the downsizing of the welfare state – has produced a vicious cycle in public debates that is difficult to break and requires a strong counter-narrative.

It is therefore important that the media, journalists, politicians and public figures take seriously their responsibility to contextualise migration accurately and responsibly. It should be stressed that migrants are people and members of our

communities. They should never be described in terms of numbers, figures, as 'problems' or as subjects in newscasts. They should be given the opportunity to speak for themselves, to voice their own stories and to present their own testimonies, while, if they wish, also engaging in policy development and in proposing solutions. Also, highlighting publically some opportunities associated with migration could further help.

③ The value of ODA has been compromised as a result of the instrumentalisation of aid and the EU's security and migration control priorities. Instead, ODA must be preserved as the EU's and its Member States' primary tool for addressing poverty.

Although voices from different sides of the political spectrum have questioned the added value and relevance of Official Development Assistance (ODA) as a tool of European foreign policy, ODA remains the primary tool through which both the European Union and its Member States can address poverty, social and economic inequalities and climate change, all major issues of our time. When responding to the needs and priorities of partner countries, if channelled to relevant domains (economic sustainable development, good governance, conflict prevention, access to food security, human rights, democratisation, and so forth), and when involving local stakeholders (including civil society), ODA can in fact play a major role towards achieving sustainable development worldwide. Unfortunately, however, worrisome trends of inflation, diversion and securitisation of European aid have been emerging, as identified in Chapter 3. There is also a problematic role of the private sector in further eroding the potential of ODA in pursuing a sustainable development agenda and increasingly, development policy is being directly linked to short-term migration-reduction objectives. The anti-migrant climate described above has clearly been a key driver in this recent policy agenda of the European Union and its Member States. In particular, the Union's preoccupation with securing its external borders, and eliminating or at least 'containing' irregular migration from outside Europe, seem to have overridden almost all other concerns related to the protection of migrants' and refugees' rights, and the preservation of development cooperation as an instrument exclusively devoted to eradicating poverty. European development policy should not be used as a migration-reduction strategy as this is a very short-sighted approach likely to backfire and it risks undermining the potential long-term benefits of development aid. If Europe wishes to retain its global role as a value- and principle-based international actor, and ensure that official development assistance leads to meaningful poverty reduction, ODA should remain a cornerstone of European external action, and should not be influenced by other foreign policy objectives.

④ The integral human development of migrants and their human dignity is being compromised due to other contradictory foreign policy objectives of the EU and its Member States.

The EU and its Member States (to varying degrees) pursue numerous practices that may compromise their development objectives and actually contribute to harming the pursuit of sustainable development for countries and people outside of Europe. Examples of this are evident, for instance, relative to policies on trade, agriculture, tax regimes, military and security, environment and asylum. Such policies can easily come into conflict with development policies and undermine the positive role played by development aid and development cooperation more generally. Moreover, in certain cases, these policies and additional practices (i.e. arms sales, land grabbing, exploitation of natural resources, etc.), can contribute to exacerbating the conditions - such as wide social and economic inequalities, conflict, and climate change - that drive forced migration and displacement, and can thus contribute to creating the conditions for increasing irregular migration movements to Europe. This tends to further compromise relations with development partners in the Global South, as described in Chapter 3. For instance, Europe's lack of commitment on expanding regular migration channels has so far embittered relations with African partners on migration cooperation. These trends and the resulting contradictory policies and actions are worrisome, because they show an utter disrespect of Policy Coherence for Development and fail to put the person at the centre of the policy or to foster an atmosphere that enables and fosters integral human development.

While the EU has tried to tackle the lack of policy coherence through the establishment of Policy Coherence for Development, numerous inconsistencies in interpretation and in practice remain, resulting in a rather ineffective translation of PCD at the operational level. The simple result is that there is no clarity or consensus among institutional stakeholders concerning the EU's commitment towards developing countries. Greater effort is clearly needed for the EU and its Member States to ensure that their policies cause no harm to developing countries and bring about a positive contribution to their sustainable development. In a context in which the EU's obligations regarding PCD remain ambiguous and in which PCD is at times applied in reverse (development at the service of other policy areas) and where mobility is framed as security-related, it is clear that political will remains a decisive factor in determining the effectiveness of PCD, as defined in the Lisbon Treaty.

⑤ Migration is a natural part of life. Opportunities must be assured so that people are not forced to migrate out of desperation, but rather via safe and legal channels in pursuit of their personal 'life projects'.

Migration and mobility in a broader sense compose a universal feature of humanity. Since the beginning of time, people have been on the move - migrating. This is not expected to stop soon; on the contrary, greater mobility is expected in the future. Migrants are often resilient and have agency, meaning they - depending on their situations and financial means - can choose how to respond to life's circumstances, i.e. whether (with whom and when) to flee their country. Expectations of substantially impacting this process through development cooperation is not only naive and likely to fail; regardless of the efforts put in place to deter, stop, or prevent migration movements, desperate people will find a way around the fences, and will continue to risk their lives along dangerous routes. If any meaningful connection between ODA and migration is to be made, then this should be to ensure that development policy contributes to making migration a choice rather than a necessity - keeping in mind that, as discussed in Chapter 1, development is likely to reduce (but will never completely stop) economically-motivated migration over the long term. Thus, in order to truly maximise the benefits of international migration, regular migration should be strengthened by giving people from all skill levels, education, and economic backgrounds the chance to move in a safe and legal manner between their countries of origin and destination.

Overall, the lesson for policy makers and communities **is to create a virtuous circle on migration and development** based upon the following logic: 1) on the one hand, migration, as with many other life choices made by human beings, is a potential opportunity for sustainable development of all countries and communities, and needs to be facilitated with measures ensuring the dignity and rights of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers; 2) on the other hand, the development agenda should be primarily concerned with fostering sustainable development in Europe and beyond for the benefit of everyone, ensuring that migration largely remains a choice and not a desperate necessity. The findings of this publication confirm that **given the right structures and legal opportunities, states should build on the potential of migration to contribute not only to the integral human development of migrants and their families, but also to communities, as well as to the sustainable development of their countries of origin, transit and destination.**

Main recommendations

In addition to these main findings, essential **recommendations** are also presented in Chapter 5 that target EU level² policy makers in the European Commission, Parliament and Council, and where applicable, also the Council of Europe. These have been summarised according to the three categories below:

① **Change the negative discourse on migration, counter rising hostility and harmful attitudes toward migrants and migration.**

Caritas calls on the European Union and its Member States to promote an evidence-based and nuanced debate on migration and development. In order to do that, it is essential to: emphasise the important role of migrants and migration's contribution to development both in countries of origin and destination; fight misinformation and disinformation through evidence-based research as well as stories and testimonies, including via EU-wide awareness-raising campaigns; and foster a culture of encounter and exchange around migration.

② **Maximise the development potential of migration and enhance migrants' integral human development in countries of destination.**

Caritas calls on the European Union and its Member States to prioritise fair migration policies and robust integration and social inclusion policies in order to maximise the integral human development potential of migrants in Europe. Such policies should lead, with respect to migration, to the expansion of safe and legal pathways to Europe for protection, including for employment and family reunification purposes, as well as to a reform of the existing Common European Asylum System. In relation to integration, the creation of structures and practices that allow the full and active participation of migrant communities in society should be supported, in particular by ensuring equality of treatment and non-discrimination, facilitating labour market inclusion, and guaranteeing access to basic social and economic rights and opportunities for all. Overall, migration, integration and social policies should ensure that the human dignity of all, including of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers are protected and respected. Building on existing global and European frameworks, such as human rights instruments and conventions, as well as new policy tools such as Agenda 2030, and the Global Compact on Migration should be used as key tools to support these policy directions.

③ **Maximise the development potential of migration, enhance opportunities for migrants to be able to contribute to integral human development and sustainable development in countries of origin, and ensure a virtuous circle between migration and development.**

Caritas calls on the European Union and its Member States to promote policies that enhance, rather than limit the potential of migration to contribute to sustainable development in countries of origin and outside of Europe. For this reason, ODA must primarily be used to tackle issues such as poverty, structural inequalities, and lack of good governance and should be based on actual recipients' needs and development strategies. European development cooperation should abstain from mainstreaming migration-reduction objectives across its programming, and from using aid as a leverage to secure concessions on migration management and control; rather it should invest resources in mitigating the scope and consequences of forced displacement (driven by conflict, environmental disasters, extreme poverty, and persecution). European institutions should place respect for human rights at the core of all partnerships with third countries, and ensure that their external policies – including those that do not respond to a development agenda – do not harm existing development opportunities in developing countries (such as for example regional mobility across Africa). Again, Agenda 2030, the Global Compact on Migration, existing Policy Coherence frameworks as well as innovative projects on labour migration should also be sources for providing promising tools to advocate for these actions.

² For national level recommendations, please refer to the 11 national Common Home studies: <https://www.caritas.eu/common-home-series/>