
Towards a ?Global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration?

[The EU-blog](#)[1] - July 3, 2018 - 14:02

(Written by: [Michela Ceccorulli](#)[2], Research fellow, University of Bologna)

(Photo: The Conference opening of the Global Compact Migration on 19 June 2017. [UN Photo / Jean-Marc Ferré](#)[3])

With nationalist calls echoing in every part of the world, it is not an easy task to engage in discussions about the future of global dynamics. Yet, this is the effort currently being made in the attempt to arrive at a ‘Global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration’ through actionable commitments under (thus far) 23 objectives.

Since the New York Declaration of 19 September 2016, talks among UN member states have been ongoing and discussions should be completed by July 2018 with a view to a ‘collective commitment to improve cooperation on migration’. The negotiations subsume among others considerations about larger dynamics at play in globalization processes: the scope of the so-called ‘international community’, the scope of the issues to be jointly discussed and, finally, the approach to be taken with respect to the governance of these processes and their by-products, such as migration. That the issue of migration has triggered such a global consideration may seem paradoxical given recent events and short-sighted policies adopted, but it is so only at first glance.

Human mobility is a global phenomenon that requires a global approach.

It is indeed ‘human mobility’, as defined by the UN Assembly, that regards many of the domains affecting and affected by globalization dynamics. The purpose is to establish comprehensive and responsible governance as an opportunity for all. The motivations are apparent: the movement of people inherently involves political, economic and social considerations with development and human rights implications, among others. Whence derives recognition that human mobility is a global phenomenon and that it requires a global approach and a multi-dimensional response. The ultimate objective of the negotiations is the insertion of a new paradigm coupled with a new narrative that erases opposing and irreducible views.

An opportunity to take

With respect to the above-mentioned ingredients of globalization, the first two – the scope of the international community considered and the extent of the issues to be jointly discussed – seem quite promising. Whilst states are at centre stage (something that rules out a drastic overhaul of the system), many other actors are engaged and their voices heard, from regional organizations to national parliaments, grass-roots civil society, local authorities, academia, the media, trade unions and migrants’ diaspora (whole of society approach). Moreover, given the September 2016 Declaration, there seems to be a quite widely shared understanding among the 193 UN Member States that governing migration in a safe, orderly and regular way means simultaneously intervening in many policy fields (whole of government approach).

The search for long-term sustainable approaches to the phenomenon of human mobility - having as a guide the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – to the benefit of host, transit and origin countries but also of migrants – critically challenges the way in which globalization has been handled thus far. It also inevitably entails broader considerations about development, health, labour standards, education, trade and investment policies, environmental degradation, demographics, and many more.

Governing migration in a safe, orderly and regular way means simultaneously intervening in many policy fields.

The invited opinions and contributions of the World Bank, the World Economic Forum, the International Labour Organization, the World Health Organization, among others, testify to this awareness. The extent of the deliberation also allows for theoretically informed, cross-disciplinary and geographically variegated academic discussion on different models, socialisation and learning dynamics and multi-level negotiation. But also on possible private and public partnerships, collective action challenges, the likelihood and the form of international regimes, bargaining games, the modalities of international cooperation and, ultimately, the effective structure of a functioning, reliable and accountable governance of global dynamics.

The negotiations, therefore, is an inclusive and comprehensive process which scores positively as far as the ongoing process is concerned.

Not so easy path

But awareness and good intentions alone do not guarantee that we are moving any further from where the overall process began, that is, before September 2016. Most of the themes under discussion would have a real impact only in the long term, while politicians have no time to waste with respect to migration concerns. And some questions, such as how to reconcile globalization dynamics with development needs and migration challenges, resist easy and shared solutions. It is, in fact, this specific Global Compact on migration, compared to the other one on 'refugees', which appears more problematic.

Awareness and good intentions alone do not guarantee that we are moving any further.

Two elements seem to already run counter to global commitment: the final document is not binding on states. So why bother? Moreover, the United States has retreated from a Global Compact strongly pursued by the Obama Presidency, which is not exactly a positive hallmark for the 'liberal world'. Moreover, the positions of some states seem to be hardening in the negotiations, approaching the very restrictive position of Australia, adding to the inflexible front.

These are hard times also for the European Union, which was long prevented from assuming the role of leader by the veto imposed by Hungary, and is now acting under Austria (which assumes the EU's Presidency on July 1st) on behalf of the 27 Member States.

The EU in the Global Compact: a new paradigm or much of the same?

So what is the EU driving at? The EU mainly talks to the African Group, whose positions on the issue are those more at odds with those of the Union especially on regularization and return, something which makes it important to play on the African Group's internal divergences through bilateral contacts. The EU insists on the importance of talks with civil society and on informal meetings with the participating actors to enhance understanding, an approach welcomed by the co-facilitators and all delegations.

The EU insists on the importance of talks with civil society and on informal meetings with the participating actors.

The EU works in coordination with the two key and like-minded international organizations actively operating in the Global Compact, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and an International Organization for Migration (IOM) now less influenced by the US. It can count on and exhibit the realization of new governance patterns, such as the EU-AU-UN Task Force created in Abidjan in November 2017. The most ambitious wish is that the final document proves to be a political card to be used in relations with third actors.

From the 'holistic' approach to migration in the Metsola-Kyenge report (2015) which clearly calls for an all-encompassing global governance of the phenomenon, to the recent developments in the foreign dimension of migration, the idea of a comprehensive and multifaceted approach is well ingrained but needs consolidation, and it represents an internal as much as a global challenge for the EU.

The retreat of migration from the domain of interior politics in favour of the foreign dimension of EU's policies has still to come about, with the consequence that the 'old narrative' (that portraying migration as a security issue mainly requiring strict control measures) continues to inform the debate. This narrative has to be overcome to trigger a more promising discourse for all actors involved and to reach the goal of 'a fundamental shift in the way that migration is perceived and framed' as agreed in the New York Declaration. However, evidence of yet another struggle among EU Member States triggered by the newly-established Italian Government (and by Minister for the Interior Salvini in particular) inevitably reiterates the EU's concern (and existence) at first place, expectedly giving new vigour to the old vision.

This blog was written as part of the research project GLOBUS Reconsidering European Contributions to Global Justice (funded by the EU's Horizon 2020 programme) and first published at the [Global Justice Blog](#) [4].

 [global-compact-660.jpg](#) [5]

This field is not in use. The footer is displayed in the mini panel called "Footer (mini panel)"

Source URL: <http://sciencenordic.com/content/towards-%E2%80%98global-compact-safe-orderly-and-regular-migration%E2%80%99>

Links:

[1] <http://sciencenordic.com/content/eu-blog>

[2] <http://www.globus.uio.no/about/team/partners/unibo-bologna/people/ceccorulli/index.html>

[3] <https://www.flickr.com/photos/unisgeneva/35271846631/in/photolist-VJRtsT-VJRsSz-VSQ3pL-VSQ3s1-VWhS1M-VSQ2S3-VWhRCT-UDS2Ej-VJR6z-VWhRaP-VJRrZT-VFAJm9-VJRrNF-VWhQNM-VWhQDD-VWhQoP-VWhQhM-VJRr9K-VWhQ7g-VJRqJX-8rESSP-8rESPX-8rHXM3-8rESUk-8rHXHh>

[4] <http://www.globus.uio.no/resources/global-justice-blog/holst-8-march-2018.html>

[5] <http://sciencenordic.com/sites/default/files/blogimages/global-compact-660.jpg>