



## **CRID and international migration**

As a collective of international solidarity organisations, the CRID (Research and Information Centre for Development), far from sharing our governments' obsession with security when dealing with 'foreigners', has a different view of migration; an objective and informed view, far-removed from the political manipulation that plays on fears of what is 'different'. The issue of migration is at the very heart of international solidarity and social, cultural, environmental and political change. This is why the CRID promotes an alternative and positive approach to international migration, in France, Europe and worldwide, in which migrants would finally be considered as full citizens and would have their rights respected.

With purely security-focused and repressive ideas prevailing about migrants coming from poor countries, countries ruled by dictators or where conflicts are raging, the phenomenon needs to be analysed from a different perspective. Migrants can no longer be society's scapegoats. Even though migration has always existed and is an integral part of humankind's history, it is solely presented as being a source of problems. The free movement of goods, services and capital has become our globalized economies' ultimate goal. However, the principle of freedom of movement for people is increasingly being flouted, despite being recognized and promoted by the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Suffering people who are forced to leave home because of war, political conflict, economic conditions and climate change are regarded as being 'illegal', as is migration itself. However, each of the world's inhabitants should be able to choose freely whether they leave or stay.

Migrants should not be seen as being at the root of all of society's ills, but rather as the bearers of great cultural, economic and social wealth. Anyone who leaves their home country to settle abroad builds a bridge between two countries and becomes a gateway to the world. Migrants bring with them knowledge and know-how of all kinds. They enhance not only their new countries of residence but also their home countries. Migrants are mediators because they belong to two places and have two sets of roots. This enables them to create opportunities in a globalized world and, as citizens, to take part in a culturally vibrant local community with different viewpoints and plenty of interaction. Accordingly, foreign nationals should be entitled to vote in local elections everywhere. Migration makes a contribution to the development of our society and our world view; it can be likened to a shared human heritage that needs to be preserved. Migrants are stakeholders in society in their home countries, in their destination countries and in the world. Many developed countries are aware of just how much they owe to the migrants who have settled there.

Migration does not boil down to what some compare to an invasion of the developed world by people from the developing world. It is worth stating that most migration nowadays takes place between developing world countries. The figures bear this out. The UN recorded 232 million migrants in 2013, with migrants leaving developing countries to settle in developed countries only accounting for 37% of the total, while migration between developing world countries and between developed countries made up 60% of the figure, with citizens of developed world countries settling in the developing world accounting for the remaining 3%. 80% of refugees, meanwhile, are taken in by developing countries.

Unfortunately, it now seems impossible to take a dispassionate approach to international migration in the developed world, and a worrying rise in racism and xenophobia is being observed. Every day,

new taboos are becoming part of public discourse, even at the highest levels, with even terrorism now being attributed to the "immigration problem".

In light of these observations, we believe there is an urgent need to take a balanced view of migration:

- Because it is intolerable that the self-same states that are responsible for dramatic situations in certain countries (including monopolizing natural resources, supporting dictatorships, and climate change; factors that maintain populations in a situation of poverty, violence and insecurity) have no response other than walls and camps to migrants' aspirations for freedom and to develop their knowledge.
- Because migrants are an integral part of the solution to the problem of some countries' aging populations.
- Because when foreign residents' universal rights are jeopardized, everyone's rights end up being flouted.
- Because the supposedly dissuasive and above all repressive measures (building walls and camps, pushback operations etc.) that cause unacceptable human tragedies in no way address the root causes of migration in a globalized world. The imbalances that produce them require responses that include them.

The CRID and its members are therefore joining forces to call for a different approach to international migration, at French, European and international level:

- We are calling for an approach incorporating all the relevant dimensions to be put into practice by states, international institutions and civil society so that international governance of migration is included in the fundamental texts on human rights.
- We are calling for an end to the policy of making development aid for developing world countries contingent upon 'managing migration flows' and we denounce the readmission agreements imposed under the same conditions.
- We are calling for reception conditions for migrants in France and Europe to respect rights and human dignity and for developed world countries to demonstrate their intent in this regard by signing and ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers and Members of their Families.
- We consequently reject the criminalisation of undocumented migrants and call for detention centres – which are legal black holes – to be closed down.
- We are calling for the right of asylum to be fully guaranteed for exiles.
- We are calling for equal rights in practice for all residents, whatever their nationality and origin.
- We are calling for freedom of movement, as established in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to be applied in practice and for it not to be the sole preserve of those who happen to be born in the developed world.
- We are therefore particularly calling on the EU states to abolish their restrictive and discriminatory visa policy so that everyone can travel, study and join their family in the country of their choice.
- Finally, we are calling for the EU Member States to stop allocating obscene budgets to border 'security' (for instance, Frontex's budget has risen from €19 million in 2006 to 114 million in 2015) to the detriment of the millions of people who truly need international protection.

*Declaration adopted by the CRID general assembly, 23 June 2015*