



Position Paper

# CLIMATE CHANGE, REFUGEES AND MIGRATION

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# INTRODUCTION

Climate change and environmental degradation have had a significant impact on population movements worldwide – and this is still to increase. As CO<sub>2</sub> emissions continue to rise, is the EU prepared to provide answers to the complex issues emerging around this process, both within and outside of its borders? How many people are being forced to move due to climate change? How many will be in the future? How should the international community respond to this challenge? What role should the EU play? And should people displaced for reasons related to climate change be granted a specific legal status?

At present, the EU has not developed any coherent policy approach around these and many other questions. The same holds true for the international community in general. The aim of this paper is to raise some of the most relevant questions and to provide a set of GREEN answers, both at EU and international levels.

## WHICH FACTORS ARE AT PLAY?

People affected by climate change may experience rapid-onset climate events such as extreme weather conditions, or slow-onset climate phenomena such as drought, desertification, land degradation or sea-level rise. The links between these processes and migration are complex, overlapping and difficult to identify, particularly in the case of slow-onset developments. For instance, it is almost impossible to assess to what extent on-going desertification contributes to migration compared to other push-factors. After all, people often do not migrate because of one single reason – economic, social and political factors always play a certain role, too. For Robin Mearns, World Bank specialist on climate change, climate change therefore "tends to amplify existing patterns, rather than provoke entirely new flows of people"<sup>1</sup>. And in some cases, severe environmental deterioration has even been correlated with reduced migration, or increased return migration. Indeed, under certain conditions, stronger political and economic forces may override an existent or even increasing climate-related push-effect on migration flows. Each situation therefore needs to be analysed thoroughly; the one-size-fits-all approach is once again no solution.

## WHICH MOVEMENTS?

Experience shows that the majority of people forced to move due to reasons related to climate change will not cross international borders, but move internally, within the affected country. This may be due to financial reasons, given that those affected often turn out to be the poorest, living in the most precarious and vulnerable situations. Also, people are generally attached to their original place of living and prefer not to move. Finally, rigid migration schemes in recipient countries make it difficult for people to migrate.

The primarily internal nature of climate-induced migration patterns is something to remember in EU and international policy discussions and responses, not least when numbers are involved. On the other hand, we should not underestimate the need for protection after cross-border movements. Indeed, affected populations may be particularly vulnerable, all the more so as they will not necessarily be entitled to admission in another country.

## WHO IS AFFECTED?

Poor countries are and will be affected first and most. But industrialised, including EU countries will be hit as well. The 2009 EACH-FOR study *Environmental Change and Forced Migration Scenarios*, for instance, devotes a whole section to the environmental impact on the south-east of Spain<sup>2</sup>.

In general, the most vulnerable members of society such as women, children, the elderly, disabled persons, minorities and indigenous peoples are the most directly concerned. Similarly, those who are highly dependent on nature and/or stand to lose their land altogether – due, for example, to erosion or rising

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in: Karin Rives: "Climate Migration" Gains the World's Attention. 14 October 2011, <http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/article/2011/10/20111014172832nirak0.3113367.html>.

<sup>2</sup> EACH-FOR: *Environmental Change and Forced Migration Scenarios*. 14 May 2009, [http://www.each-for.eu/documents/EACH-FOR\\_Synthesis\\_Report\\_090515.pdf](http://www.each-for.eu/documents/EACH-FOR_Synthesis_Report_090515.pdf).

water levels – will feel climate-change phenomena much more than others, since they have nowhere to return to, no land to improve. Some countries even face the total disappearance of their territory due to climate change, such as many of the so-called Small Island States. Should those countries' governments and people decide to maintain their statehood rather than merge into another country, we'll be confronted with a tough challenge to equity and responsibility in the context of climate change. Given the specificity of this issue, we won't discuss the particular case of Small Island States here. This, however, should not be understood as prioritisation or valuation whatsoever.

## HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

There are broad-ranging estimates on how many people will be forced to move due to environmental phenomena. Numbers largely depend on how the group of affected people is being defined. Experts speak of 15 million in 2009 and 38 million in 2010<sup>3</sup>. According to recent estimates, between 250 million and one billion people might be affected by 2050. But there are clear limitations to such predictions, which should therefore be handled with caution.

## TERMINOLOGY

There is considerable debate about the terminology – which is to be welcomed, as experts thereby frame the discussion and possible solutions. In this context, terms like "environmental refugee" or "climate refugee" have been questioned. Especially UNHCR sees the use of "refugee" critically, underlining that it has a specific meaning in international law as defined by the Geneva Convention. UNHCR therefore fears that using "refugee" may undermine systems currently in place to provide protection to refugees.

The study *Climate Refugees: Legal and Policy Responses to Environmentally Induced Migration* prepared for the Civil Liberties Committee of the European Parliament in 2011 concludes accordingly: "Because of the fact that the term 'environmental refugee' has been challenged both in the academic and political debate, we suggest to use the more general term of 'environmentally induced migration' to denote the broader phenomenon and 'environmentally induced displacement' to denote forced forms of mobility primarily engendered by environmental change<sup>4</sup>."

Others suggest "environmentally displaced person" and "environmentally induced migration". They argue that it is not only inadvisable to use the word "refugee", but that it is often impossible to specifically pinpoint the impact of climate change on a person's decision to move, and that "environmental" would therefore be the better choice.

Not everyone agrees. Certain experts claim that "environmental" is too broad. Industrial accidents, for instance, are environmental, but rarely related to climate change. The same holds for most nuclear catastrophes, or the construction of a dam. All these phenomena are possible push-factors of displacement, all are environmental, but not all of them are necessarily linked to climate change. Most importantly, however: Many fall under already existing protection schemes and don't have to be covered by new mechanisms.

Also, a number of politicians and specialists argue that "refugee" makes it much clearer than "migrant" that we are talking about (planned or un-planned) forced rather than voluntary movements, taking place due to (slow-onset or sudden) external factors.

As GREENS, we are fully aware of these arguments and debates, and we don't underestimate their importance. Neither do we believe that one option is more relevant than the other. All sides have good reasons to defend their position, and each terminology has advantages and downsides. As we consider, however, that a decision needs to be taken, we opt for using "climate refugee" to describe the affected

<sup>3</sup> Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations, International Organization for Migration: *The State of Environmental Migration 2010*. December 2011, Paris, Geneva, [www.iddri.org/Publications/Collections/Analyses/STUDY0711\\_SEM\\_2010\\_web.pdf](http://www.iddri.org/Publications/Collections/Analyses/STUDY0711_SEM_2010_web.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Policy Department C: Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs of the European Parliament: *Climate refugees: Legal and Policy Responses to Environmentally Induced Migration*. Carried out at the request of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs of the European Parliament. December 2011, Brussels, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/de/studiesdownload.html?languageDocument=EN&file=60931>.

person, and "climate migration" to describe the phenomenon as such, both in internal and public communication. We believe that the use of "climate refugee" and "climate migration" is the most pragmatic solution in a political debate, providing a straight-forward, easily understandable and translatable label to a complicated issue: the displacement of individuals or groups of people fleeing a slow-onset change in their environment or a sudden disaster, which are directly triggered, partly caused or at least exacerbated by climate change.

At the same time, we insist on the fact that using "climate refugee" does not determine the legal status of the affected people. Neither should it ignore the underlying debate about the multi-dimensional nature of migration.

# ADAPTATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Climate-induced migration is strongly cross-related to poverty. It is mainly the poor countries that have the fewest resources to adapt to climate change. Climate change can, in turn, aggravate poverty. And within poor countries, the poorest are often forced to live in zones of highest risk, like river banks prone to erosion, and therefore most vulnerable.

As most displaced persons migrate within their borders, national governments have a special responsibility to manage migration and protect the affected people. As a result, assisting those stakeholders through the established channels of development cooperation is essential for cushioning the negative impact of climate change. Of course, development aid should not replace proper legal and institutional solutions to climate migration, or serve as an excuse not to push for such solutions. Nevertheless, development aid will remain an important policy tool, and should therefore take climate change and migration much more into account.

In this context, the financial means for dealing with climate change need to be additional to ODA quotas. As GREENS, we should always insist that the current practice of using ODA to pay for the reception of refugees, for instance in some EU member states, or to prevent migration from African countries into the EU is the wrong way of using these funds.

## ADAPTATION AND STRENGTHENING RESILIENCE

Adaptation focuses on reducing affected (mainly poor) people's vulnerability, thereby strengthening the prevention of displacement. Well-prepared initiatives for environmental protection, land-use planning, natural resource management and the development of settlements can substantially reduce disaster risks, and thereby reduce actual migratory movements. In this context, experts of the *Environmental Justice Foundation* rightly underline the importance of keeping a balance between supporting structural preparedness (such as engineering in the area of disaster risk reduction) and non-structural preparedness (such as risk assessment skills). Donors can assist in implementing adaptation measures like reforestation or new agricultural techniques. At all levels, it has to be made sure that adaptation funds be distributed in a transparent manner, while focussing on those communities that have the most urgent needs.

## EARLY WARNING

It is of utmost importance to develop well-functioning early-warning systems for natural disasters like cyclones. Many lives and livelihoods can be saved if people are warned in due time of an upcoming storm. Not only will they be able to save their lives, but they might also organise their departure and take their belongings, which increases both resilience and the chance of returning, or at least facilitates setting up a new livelihood somewhere else. Development partners can play a role in providing technology and know-how on such warning systems.

## DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Very much related to the above is disaster risk reduction. Measures to reduce the impact of a natural disaster, including the set-up of dike systems, are key in order to release pressure off of people. Again, the exchange of knowledge can play an important role, for example when Dutch constructors assist Bangladeshi authorities in building and refining local dike networks. At the same time, if we want to guarantee sustainable results, it will be paramount to prioritise participation and ownership by the affected communities, i.e. to rely on local knowledge and traditional ways of dealing with disasters. The EU as a donor should take into account past experience and alternative funding streams in the development and disaster risk reduction sectors, with the view to complementary or joined-up adaptation funding.

## ORGANISED MIGRATION

There are situations where, despite all prevention measures, people will have to leave their livelihoods. Migration can be a possible adaptation strategy, but only if it is well organised. Indeed, especially when fleeing slow-onset changes of the environment, the decision to migrate should be voluntary and planned.

Also, without the possibility to return, it is crucial to address the challenges of resettlement and re-integration. Governments should therefore implement the *Guiding Principles of Internally Displaced Persons* (see below) and donors can assist in developing national laws. Labour migration schemes should be developed for those people who wish or have to cross international borders.

### **NEW LIVELIHOOD**

When people have to move, they need shelter, access to land, water, food and new sources of income. Often, they have lost all their belongings. Loss compensation is thus the cornerstone of starting a new life somewhere else. In this context, the most important measure is to reduce people's risk by providing new sources of income if previous sources have been lost due or partly due to phenomena related to climate change. Development cooperation can help tackle these challenges by assisting local governments and authorities. Therefore, supporting mechanisms in receiving communities – taking into account their own needs – have to be developed.

As GREENS, we call on all relevant authorities worldwide, but particularly on industrialised countries to implement these measures. On EU level, we need to adapt our development policy strategies, and we need additional funding. A first step would be to provide the funds for climate financing that the EU has promised in the past, in order to fulfil the common objective of mobilizing 100 billion dollars per year by 2020 additionally to traditional development aid. A significant share of EU climate financing for developing countries should go into the abovementioned sectors.

# LEGAL OPTIONS

Even though mitigation of and adaptation to climate change will be paramount throughout the coming years and decades, climate migration already exists, and will intensify. Under current legal provisions, however, people who move because of some long-term climate-related threat are seen as voluntary or economic migrants with no entitlement to protection, while those moving after sudden environmental disasters often qualify for short-term humanitarian aid, but no longer-term support. If not closed, these legal gaps will cause major difficulties and humanitarian crises. The EU should grasp the opportunity and act as leading political force in the process of finding answers to the numerous questions at hand.

## INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE

Most climate migration occurs within the borders of a given country, mainly for financial reasons. In this context, the 1998 *UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* define a whole raft of recommendations on how to treat internally displaced persons (IDPs) in general and, to some extent, how to handle internal climate migration.

The Guiding Principles, however, are not binding and, as a consequence, not universally applied. Many developing countries, which are most seriously affected by internal displacement, simply cannot afford apply them, as long as they receive insufficient support from the international community. As a result, just selected parts of the Guiding Principles have been transposed into national law. Moreover, some of these provisions have been implemented with reference to certain phases of displacement, or a limited group of people only. Also, there is a clear lack of stressors related to climate change in the Guiding Principle's list of justifications for displacement, which heavily limits effective protection and assistance of IDPs moving, among others, because of climate-related reasons.

As GREENS, we call on affected countries to implement the Guiding Principles more stringently. Similar to the polluter-pays principle, industrialised countries should focus much more on the issue of internal displacement in third countries, fulfil aid promises made in the past, and increase their financial and technical support in the future.

## CROSS-BORDER CLIMATE MIGRATION

According to article 1.A(2) of the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, the so-called Geneva Convention, a "refugee" is a person who:

*... owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.*

Obviously, given the above definition, none of the measures envisaged in the Geneva Convention applies to climate refugees, as long as they have not partly left their homeland due to other reasons listed in article 1. Therefore, legal solutions will have to be found if we want to avoid that hundreds of thousands of people end up stranded in other countries without any protection or entitlement to stay.

As GREENS, we suggest a combination of different approaches to cross-border climate migration. On the one hand, it will be paramount to analyse, support and further develop local practises and systems, as they will allow well-adapted solutions where help to climate refugees is most needed – even in the absence of larger-scale international decisions. On the other hand, the international community should simultaneously

tackle climate migration on a higher political level. As GREENS, we see these two processes as interdependent, inseparable and indispensable.

### **AXIS ONE: BUILD ON LOCAL, NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEGISLATION**

It is a politically unfortunate reality that those states which are most interested in finding solutions to cross-border climate migration – primarily developing countries or even LDCs – turn out to have a comparably weak position in international fora while actors like the EU are turning a blind eye on the issue. This makes a legal solution on a broad international level improbable, at least in the near future. A bottom-up approach to international governance, similar to the one that led to the Guiding Principles on IDPs, therefore represents an important first part of our GREEN strategy to tackle cross-border climate migration.

The international community, including the EU, should therefore support (financially as much as politically) an ever-denser structure of local, national and regional initiatives – in the hope that this jigsaw will first develop into a non-binding but universally agreed-upon synthesis of existing mechanisms and best practices, and ultimately coalesce to become part of a unified and binding international system of governance, combining both "axes" of our strategy.

Several local, national and regional projects already exist, upon which a bottom-up approach could be built.

- For instance, the *Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of the Refugee Problem in Africa*, adopted in 1969 by the African Union, extends the refugee definition of the Geneva Convention to persons who cross borders following "events seriously disturbing public order", which might apply to climate refugees.
- Ratified in December 2012, the 2009 *Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa* of the African Union became one of the first legally-binding texts on, among others, climate migration worldwide.
- The *US Immigration Act* of 1990 guarantees temporary protection in cases of floods, epidemics, earthquakes or droughts when the government concerned is unable to manage the return of nationals that have fled onto American territory. The country of origin, however, must send an official request – which would be unthinkable when it comes to governments that are not unable, but unwilling to take care of their climate refugees.
- Sweden and Finland, but also countries such as New Zealand and Australia have enacted comparable – mainly demand-driven and bilateral – protection mechanisms that include climate-related stressors, at least on paper.

### **AXIS TWO: SUPPORT DEBATES AND SEEK BROADER SOLUTIONS ON AN INTERNATIONAL LEVEL**

As GREENS, we see the bottom-up approach as necessary, but not sufficient to finding answers to climate migration – especially because it will most probably not impel any of the industrialised countries, having largely caused but only marginally been hit by climate change, to get on board. Broader debates on an international level, leading to binding procedures and common institutions will be needed if we want to handle the growing number of challenges related to climate migration efficiently and in the interest of all stakeholders – countries of origin, receiving countries and climate refugees themselves.

Given that the debate on climate migration has just started to evolve, due to a rather limited number of outspoken experts and NGOs, it is unclear which forum will and should take the lead.

As GREENS, we take an open and flexible position, but would like to exclude a few options for political or strategic reasons, as described below.



An extension of the scope of the Geneva Convention to cover climate refugees is often cited as one possible option to address the existing protection gaps. Indeed, all signatory states of the Geneva Convention already have operational procedures in place, which would ease the practical implementation of a possible extension. On the other hand, especially UNHCR – in charge of managing the practical implications of the Geneva Convention – has voiced major concerns. The UN agency would sooner or later have to face a number of refugees that goes far beyond levels under the current version of the Geneva Convention. Moreover, the Geneva Convention has an individual approach that might not be appropriate for climate refugees, which tend to be affected at community level. Finally, an expansion of the Convention might lead to the attempt by some states to water down existing provisions.

As GREENS, we therefore exclude a re-negotiation of the Geneva Convention, unless a viable solution can be found by not amending the Convention itself, but adding a Protocol. This, in turn, would allow a clear distinction between climate migration and traditional asylum, both in qualitative and quantitative terms, while building upon precious existing structures, know-how and procedures.

Instead of extending the Geneva Convention, some experts suggest adding a Protocol to the *UN Framework Convention of Climate Change*, or UNFCCC. While additional structures would have to be created, the international community could rely on existing processes. Also, the UNFCCC explicitly reaffirmed its commitment to the *Precautionary Principle* and the *Principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibility*, which could serve as a solid basis of a possible legal solution to climate migration. Finally, the UNFCCC *Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-Term Cooperative Action* formally acknowledged, in article 14.f of the *Cancun Adaptation Framework*, the need to undertake "measures to enhance understanding, coordination and cooperation with regard to climate change induced displacement, migration and planned relocation, where appropriate, at national, regional and international levels".

As GREENS, however, we have doubts whether the UNFCCC would be an appropriate forum to discuss and legally tackle climate migration. UNFCCC discussions have turned out to be extremely complicated, slow and arduous. Adding another major chapter might detract the international community from the UNFCCC's priority objective, i.e. emissions reduction, and decrease the pace of progress even further. However, funding to assist those affected should be brought into discussion on the UNFCCC-related climate fund.

This doesn't imply, however, that the UN as such should be excluded as the appropriate institution for approaching climate migration. Broadening the *UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* to also cover cross-border displacement, for instance, is being discussed as a realistic legal solution. It would build on existing semi-legal structures and institutions such as the UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons. Also, no entirely new definition would be needed, as the Guiding Principles already apply to "persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or leave their homes of habitual places of residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of ... human-made disasters."

Also, an entirely new legal text on climate refugees and migration is an option – along with its own institutions, funds and mechanisms. Several draft texts and concepts already exist. Moreover, the international community would not have to deal with existing structures and processes that have become standard over time, and therefore difficult to reform. One organisation could bundle all competences, and a fresh start would allow specific regions – such as the EU – to take the lead more easily.

Last but not least, some experts suggest an expansion of the *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families* of 1990, or of the *UN Convention to Combat Desertification*.

As GREENS, depending on where the strongest momentum is possible, we are willing to support these options – be it an additional protocol to the Geneva Convention, an expansion of the Guiding Principles, entirely new legal structures or any other option not explicitly excluded above. However, the international community should not hide behind a multi-level approach, but take the challenges posed by climate migration seriously. Eventually, a coherent and binding solution – including appropriate definitions, rules, institutions and funding – must be determined in one way or another, and time is running. We therefore call on the EU to take the lead, to support the affected countries that raise the issue, to bring the debate forward on all relevant levels, to get a clearer overview of where progress is most realistic, and to foster such progress accordingly.

More generally, we believe that a holistic and human-rights-based approach to climate change could bridge several of the existing gaps at the same time. Climate migration is a multi-faceted phenomenon. Linking policies on climate change, environment, development, migration, disaster risk reduction, conflict prevention and peace-building under a human-rights umbrella therefore could represent a major step towards improving climate-change policy, by providing a useful framework through which the international community could identify the most vulnerable people, and those areas where need for action is greatest.

## EU OPTIONS

At present, there are no coherent policy proposals coming from the EU on how to respond to the phenomenon of climate migration. In theory, though, the Lisbon Treaty provides a sufficiently broad mandate for a revision of the EU's asylum and immigration policy, in order to also regulate climate migration. Such a revision would be timely, as there is currently no distinct instrument applicable to and regulating the status of climate refugees.

As GREENS, we do not only want the EU to take a leading role on climate migration in international institutions, but also to raise awareness and push for practical solutions in Europe and on the ground. We therefore support debate and progress on a number of EU options, including the following policy instruments.

### QUALIFICATION DIRECTIVE

Some thinking suggests the Qualifications Directive 2011/95/EU as a relevant instrument to which a specific category could be added. Aside from refugees as defined by the Geneva Convention, the Qualifications Directive also covers the category of those in need of subsidiary protection, targeting people in need of protection from risk of serious harm. In a number of Member States, this may include a climate-change dimension, but it is not clear whether this provision has ever been used to this end.

Unfortunately, it was not possible to add any such consideration when the European Parliament was consulted on the initial Directive in 2002, and the relevant article was not opened for amendments in the recast proposals, completed in 2011. Any change to the Directive will now have to be done at the Member State level, as the revised version of the Qualifications Directive is transposed into national law. This is highly improbable, but as GREENS, we would welcome Member States considering such a progressive policy development.

### TEMPORARY PROTECTION DIRECTIVE

The Temporary Protection Directive 2001/55/EC was established to provide minimum standards of temporary protection in the event of a "mass influx" of displaced persons from third countries.

The Directive is less prescriptive in its wording as to who is granted protection than the Qualifications Directive, covering those who have "fled areas of armed conflict of endemic violence and persons at serious risk of, or who have been victims of, systematic or generalized violations of their human rights". Some argue this interpretation could be deemed sufficiently broad to identify climate refugees; maybe more usefully, the Directive could be recast to specifically include this group. As GREENS, we support this option.

In this case, other provisions of the Directive should also be adapted. Most importantly, the Temporary Protection Directive is, in its current version, only to be used in cases of "mass influxes". This could be foreseen as the result of a sudden-onset disaster. Slow-onset changes, by contrast, are unlikely to trigger the high threshold required to activate the mechanism. As a result, many climate refugees would practically be excluded from the Directive's provisions. As GREENS, we therefore support extending the Directive to also include climate migration.

Also, the activation of this Directive needs the support of a qualified majority in the European Council, which represents another hurdle worth lowering. And it might be worth noticing that so far, the Directive has never been invoked.

### RE-ADMISSION AND RETURNS DIRECTIVE

Recent EU legislation on migration has seen major arguments on issues relating to the social rights of migrants and a desire, especially by Member States, to look at migration as a short-term phenomenon with

an emphasis on return, supported by tough legislation. This is also backed by the proliferation of re-admission agreements with third countries and a growing insistence on such agreements as part of our international and trade policy. The EU is not currently offering long-term migration solutions.

It could be possible, in this context, to introduce changes in the Returns Directive, to invoke serious slow-onset climate-change events in the country of origin as a factor to be considered in suspending the return decision. As with many of these proposals, politically this would be difficult, but our policies have to reflect the change in reality on the ground for an increasing number of the world's population. As GREENS, we therefore support the idea. Tackling climate change is about global solidarity, and this has to be extended to the people concerned.

## **RESETTLEMENT**

Part of the focus on resettlement schemes is used for protection needs, but has to be given special emphasis where climate change forms part of the context. This may take time to become fully effective, as we have seen how reluctant some Member States are to accept the concept of resettlement at all. Still, the EU Joint Resettlement programme was adopted in March 2012; it represents another piece of the jigsaw in trying to deal with the problem, and has our support.

## **LEGAL, INCLUDING CIRCULAR MIGRATION**

As GREENS, we support the creation of more legal migration options in the EU. Seasonal or circular migration, for instance, is a coping strategy for some, and can be a way of supporting a livelihood in the country of origin. The European Parliament and Council are currently discussing the proposed legislation concerning seasonal workers, and we are seeing a restrictive approach being employed by the Council.

Our national governments should instead look at this proposed Directive through a wider lens and consider the EU's own research on the likely future climate of the Mediterranean and other areas. Circular migration programmes, giving migrant workers the possibility of coming and going between their country of work and country of origin, may give people the opportunity of maintaining their links as an adaptation mechanism, giving a greater possibility for them to develop new forms of livelihood. As GREENS, we therefore support the project of an EU policy on circular migration, as long as it also allows people to shift into long-term migration status.

Similarly, we could build on the idea of mobility partnerships and have a more planned and structured approach, including elements of circular migration. We have some ideas where the main climate-related stresses will fall and can take that into account in designing those partnerships, which could contain an element of preferential access. As GREENS, we consider the establishment or extension of labour migration schemes a promising policy option to respond to slow-onset phenomena. The availability of legal migration opportunities allows people to diversify their livelihoods.

## **REMITTANCES**

We know that for many third countries (and indeed some Member States) remittances are important to the individual household and the national economy. We should be examining with diaspora and home communities how such money can be used to improve environmental resilience.

## **NATIONAL RESPONSES**

As already discussed, several countries' national legislation explicitly considers environmentally displaced individuals, at least on paper. Cyprus and Finland have some kind of legal provision on climate refugees, but also Italy and Sweden. These examples should be analysed thoroughly and could be considered as good practice for other Member States, or even a model for EU legislation.