

## Latin America & Caribbean

Increasing insecurity in the Northern Triangle of Central America and the political crisis in Venezuela have triggered refugee flows of dramatic proportions and renewed efforts to ensure protection of unaccompanied migrant children and victims of trafficking and smuggling. Along with this, integration and re-integration of returning migrants from North America remain top priorities for governments in a region that benefits from a high degree of regional integration and cooperation mechanisms.

### Trends and challenges

From the second half of the 19th century to the first half of the 20th century, southern Europeans migrated intensively towards Latin American countries. After World War II, with the widening of the gap in the socio-economic development of Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), this trend reversed. In parallel, since the 1970s, countries in the region have witnessed important emigration flows, especially towards the United States of America (USA), Canada, Europe and Japan, but also increasingly to other LAC countries<sup>1</sup>.

Between 2000 and 2017, the international migrant stock in LAC increased by an average of 2.2% annually, reaching an estimate of 9.5 million<sup>2</sup>.

Forced migration flows driven by political conflict and human rights violations have been a constant in the region since the 1970s. In recent years, increasing insecurity in the Northern Triangle of Central America and the political crisis in Venezuela have triggered refugee flows of dramatic proportions to neighbouring countries: between 2016 and 2017 the number of



Venezuelan asylum seekers in Brazil and Peru jumped by almost 750%.<sup>3</sup>

Although 70% of the total emigrant stock in 2017 was

located in the USA, intra-regional labour migration also represents an important phenomenon in LAC (16% in 2017). Family reunification, educational opportunities, employment abroad and intra-regional treaties facilitating the movement and establishment of citizens within the Andean Community, CARICOM, MERCOSUR and the Pacific Alliance drive intra-regional migration. The International Labour Organization estimated that in 2015, out of 9.2 million migrants in LAC, roughly half (4.35 million) were migrant workers.<sup>4</sup>

Regional organisations are playing an important role in supporting enhanced migration governance. The Organization of American States (OAS) is fostering the protection of human rights through the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) and the fulfilment of obligations towards refugees through the promotion of the Cartagena Declaration. It has nominated a Rapporteur on the Rights of Migrants, whose mandate is focused on respecting and guaranteeing the rights of migrants, asylum seekers, refugees, stateless persons, victims of human trafficking, and internally displaced persons.

<sup>1</sup> Jorge Martínez Pizarro and Miguel Villa, *International Migration in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Summary View of Trends and Patterns*, United Nations Expert group Meeting on International Migration and Development, 5 July 2005. Available online at: [http://www.un.org/esa/population/meetings/ittmigdev2005/P14\\_JMartinez\\_ECLAC.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/population/meetings/ittmigdev2005/P14_JMartinez_ECLAC.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> IOM, *World Migration Report 2017*. Available at: <https://www.iom.int/wmr/world-migration-report-2018>.

<sup>3</sup> Calculations based on data from UNHCR Population Statistics: <http://popstats.unhcr.org/en/overview>.

<sup>4</sup> ILO, *Labour Migration in Latin America and the Caribbean. Diagnosis, Strategy and ILO's Work in the Region*, 2017, p. 21. Available online: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---americas/---ro-lima/documents/publication/wcms\\_548185.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---americas/---ro-lima/documents/publication/wcms_548185.pdf).

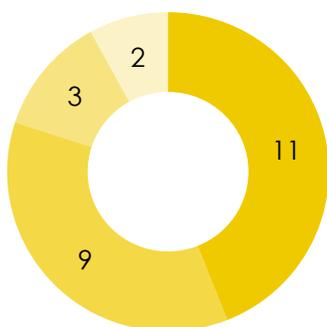
As conflict-driven migration flows have intensified, the issue of protection of migrants and refugees has become prominent in policy responses. Many governments across LAC are developing programmes and seeking cooperation to ensure international protection and asylum; the integration and reintegration of migrants; the addressing of trafficking in human beings (THB); and the formulation of new mechanisms and strategies to counter smuggling of migrants.

## MIEUX in LAC

The majority of MIEUX interventions have focused on human trafficking and, more recently, smuggling of migrants.

In 2017 alone, MIEUX implemented 21 activities throughout the region, representing the highest number since the start of operations and a 280% increase from the previous year.

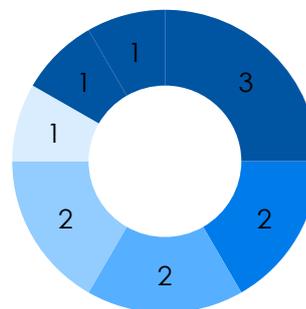
### MIEUX Actions in LAC according to thematic areas



- Irregular Migration and Trafficking in Human Beings
- Horizontal Interventions
- Legal Migration
- International Protection and Asylum

When it comes to horizontal interventions, countries have requested to work on topics such as human rights, unaccompanied minors, consular affairs and capacity development.

### Thematic areas within horizontal interventions



- Capacity Development and Training
- Consular Affairs
- Human Rights
- Unaccompanied Minors
- Migration Policy/Strategy Development
- Migration Data
- Public Relations/Communication/Information

### Mexico (2015-ongoing)

<i>Context</i>	A growing number of unaccompanied minors is entering Mexico to flee insecurity and poverty in the Northern Triangle.
<i>Objective</i>	Strengthen the capacities of Mexican migration authorities in the identification, monitoring and adequate protection of unaccompanied migrant minors.
<i>Result</i>	Handbook on European Union (EU) practices on protection and assistance of unaccompanied minors

### Mexico II (2016-ongoing)

<i>Context</i>	Mexico has become the transit and destination country for migrants and refugees from the Northern Triangle.
<i>Objective</i>	Strengthen capacities of Mexican authorities in identification and protection of refugees and the

integration of immigrants

*Result* Provide training for 755 government officials with mandates in the area of integration, the Mexican Commission for Refugee Assistance, and non-governmental and international organisation staff

*Objective*

To strengthen the knowledge of staff working at the provincial desks of the Permanent Multilateral Commission against THB and Migrant Smuggling by delivering specific training and also developing guidelines

*Result*

Development of inter-sectoral guidelines on fighting migrant smuggling, and a training curriculum on THB for government officials

### Costa Rica I (2011-2013) and II (2017)

*Context* Integration has become a key objective for the Costa Rican Government

*Objective* Support policy development in the area of integration and strengthen capacities to fight against smuggling of migrants

*Result* First and Second National Integration Plans of Costa Rica (2013-2017 and 2018-2022 respectively).

### Fostering a fair governance of migration in line with human rights standards in LAC: the way forward

Following MIEUX's presence and experience over the last ten years in the region, the following points could be considered as guidelines for practitioners working on migration across LAC to reinforce current efforts displayed by governments to promote a more efficient, fair, and human rights-based approach to migration governance and international protection.

These priorities support the underlining principles and objectives of the UN Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, for instance the renewed efforts towards respecting human rights and whole-of-government approach in migration governance.

### IberRed (2017-2018)

*Context* Judicial cooperation is a key component in the fight against intra- and trans-regional trafficking and smuggling of migrants

*Objective* To support to the drafting of a revised protocol for inter-institutional cooperation on trafficking and smuggling among public prosecutors of the Ibero-American region

*Result* Revised version of the 'Protocol for Inter-institutional Cooperation to Strengthen Investigation, Attention and Protection of Victims of Trafficking in Persons among Ibero-American Public Prosecutor's Offices'

### The EU-LAC Dialogue

The EU and LAC face similar challenges related to migration. Accommodating increased volumes of asylum applications, managing mixed migration flows and ensuring migrants are integrated into local societies are some of the most pressing needs. Therefore, the consolidation of a permanent and structured dialogue on migration to exchange good practices at bi-regional level can enhance cooperation and consolidate sustainable and inclusive development.

### Peru III (2017 – ongoing)

*Context* Certain provinces of Peru are major transit routes for the smuggling of migrants in LAC, but so far authorities have focused mainly on investigation and prosecution of THB.

### Regional and sub-regional approaches to migration governance

Taking into consideration the considerable increase



in intra-regional migration within LAC, the regional response to migration management needs to be strengthened. To support this, the further facilitation of free movement of persons, as already promoted by many regional and sub-regional organisations, is proving to be an effective tool to support orderly migration in line with protection standards. In addition, local levels of government are frequently at the forefront in managing migration, especially when it comes to socio-economic inclusion and integration. Their role needs to be further supported, for instance through the provision of capacity building assistance.

## Implementation of policy frameworks and measures

In recent years, many countries in LAC have been developing important measures to protect the rights of migrant and refugees. Nevertheless, these innovative policy and legislative measures can at times encounter some difficulties at the implementation stage. In this sense, the support and promotion of cooperation protocols, implementation measures and practical arrangements in general should be further sought.

## Addressing THB and SOM

Countering THB remains a key priority for the region. Further support could be provided through enhanced international, regional and inter-regional cooperation, for instance focusing on transnational referral mechanisms, as fostered by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) worldwide, and specifically the establishment of regional referral mechanisms for the victims of THB. At the same time, countering smuggling of migrants (SOM) has increasingly risen to the top of the agenda of many LAC countries. The MIEUX IberRed Action exemplifies such support.

## Cooperation and exchange on integration and reintegration measures

Ensuring a safe, fair and efficient integration of migrants is an important priority for LAC. Further exchanges among States on this issue might

prove highly beneficial, especially in the recognition of skills and work experience, integration of asylum seekers (a growing concern for many countries) and family reunification. In addition, countries are currently looking for sustainable reintegration solutions for which increased trans-regional exchange with the EU could prove beneficial.

## Further exchange on protection of vulnerable groups

Providing assistance and protection to vulnerable groups has become a key priority for many LAC countries, and many good practices have been developed, for instance on special migratory situations (in Costa Rica) and unaccompanied minors. The formulation and implementation of such measures should be further sought, promoted and disseminated.

## Promote partnerships among equals on migration issues

Peer-to-peer partnerships and exchanges of good practices have proven highly relevant for LAC countries seeking to develop innovative human rights-based responses to issues of asylum, protection and integration. Initiatives promoting the peer-to-peer exchange of expertise and innovative solutions, as exemplified by MIEUX, can represent real added value in fostering the promotion of effective, innovative and fair migration governance in the region and worldwide.

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