

# EPIM ANNUAL REPORT

2022

Epim  
European Programme  
for Integration  
and Migration



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**Front Cover Photos (From Left to Right):**

ERGO Mission in CZ  
Photo: ERGO Network

Konsorcium Meeting  
Photo: Konsorcium

NOCAP Gathering 2022  
Photo: NOCAP

The ESWA Team  
Photo: ESWA

# 1. Looking Back at the Year

2022 was another momentous year for both European migration and EPIM. Barely out of the throes of the COVID-19 pandemic, the continent was engulfed by the refugee crisis precipitated by the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February. An estimated 8 million Ukrainians sought refuge in Europe in 2022, resulting in an unprecedented challenge for and response from the EU. [The triggering of the Temporary Protection Directive \(TPD\)](#), a hitherto unused aspect of the EU's protection regime to provide a bloc-wide basis for refuge for Ukrainians was a welcome move, as was the heart-warming and inspiring display of solidarity by Ukraine's neighbours in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). Yet, it also underlined the blatant double-standard at play in European countries' treatment of refugees, as [they chose selectively to enforce the TPD](#), ignoring many asylum seekers, students and migrants from Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia, forced out from Ukraine and also present at other EU borders.

Much of the displacement from Ukraine has focussed on Ukraine's borders, with Poland, Czechia, Slovakia, Romania, and Moldova taking in the bulk of the refugees. This mass arrival has posed significant challenges for the education, healthcare, and social systems of these countries and in many cases has significantly exacerbated existing shortfalls in areas like access to childcare facilities, mental and psychosocial support, and services for the elderly. Yet, these countries have displayed significant adaptive capacity and resilience to ensure that most Ukrainians have been supported adequately, underlining the immense potential of Europe's protection regime, should the appropriate political dispensation and framing be in place, and offering lessons that should be heeded and built-upon, in service of other displaced populations.

The situation in Southern Europe remains dismal as (often violent) pushbacks continued at Greek-Turkish border and the Evros River and in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea. The reception crisis on Greece's Aegean Islands and Cyprus continued unabated with facilities for new arrivals being sorely missed and a visible anti-migrant sentiment emerging. In the Southern Mediterranean, Italy's stance against the docking of search and rescue ships and the flashpoints within Spain's Moroccan enclaves remain issues of concern. And in the

Western Balkans, the emergence of a new route of entry into the EU that involves visa-free travellers entering Serbia and then moving northwards, posed further challenges, as did the increasing number of boats cross the English Channel.

2022 also witnessed some promising developments on labour migration and market integration at the European level, with the launch of the [EU Talent Pool and the EU Talent Partnerships](#) schemes to attract foreign students, graduates and skilled migrants, and [the renewal of the European Partnership for Integration between the Commission and European Social and five Economic Partners](#). The recognition of 2023 as the [European Year of Skills](#) and the rise of global schemes like Talent Beyond Boundaries only serve to highlight the importance of labour migration and refugee skills pathways to EPIM and its partners.

EPIM's programming in 2022, thus reflected upon and responded to these challenges and opportunities and maintained its focus on the long-term strategic goals enounced in the EPIM Forward Strategy (2019-2023). It also witnessed the implementation of several activities across different thematic funds building on the approvals granted in 2021. Specifically, EPIM supported projects in spheres such as detention, decent work and housing, strategic communications, regularisation, and strategic litigation, across Europe. Complimenting this and in addition to its programming, the EPIM team also embarked on a Process of Change that seeks to build upon and strengthen EPIM as a collaborative fund and provide a new framework for functioning beyond the end of its current strategy.

## EPIM 2022 in Figures

**4.23M**

EUR spent by EPIM, of which 90% were grants awarded to civil society organisations (CSOs)

**5.15M**

EUR of new income confirmed since December 2020

**18**

grants awarded as part of the Ukraine Response with a total of 2.9M EUR granted

**109**

grantee partners across 29 countries directly supported by EPIM in 2022

**43**

grants currently active including 34 new grants starting or approved in 2022

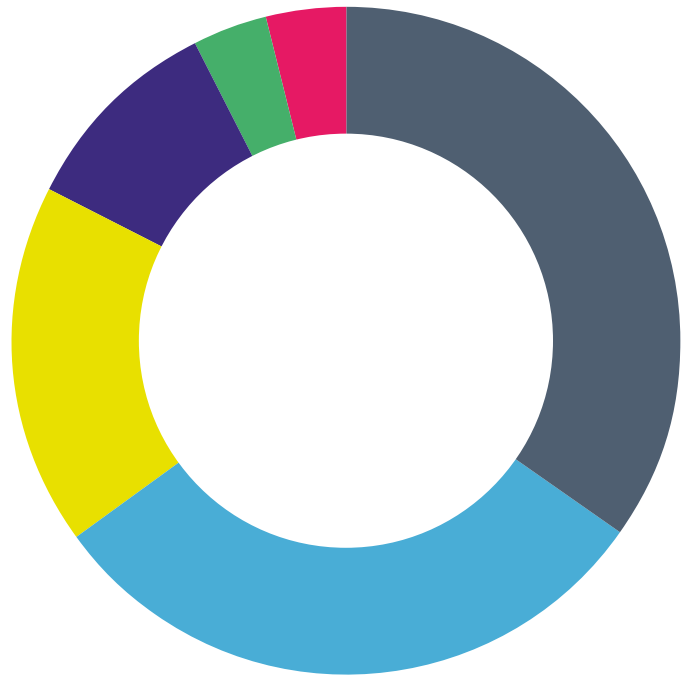
**24**

grantee partners are led by people with Lived Migration Experience

## 2022 Grantee Partners and their Areas of Work

### Areas of Work (Number of Organisations)

● Discretionary Funds - Ukraine response	38
● Future of Migration Governance	33
● Discretionary Funds - Outside Ukraine Response	19
● Children on the Move	11
● Inclusion	4
● Intra-EU Mobility	4
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>109</b>



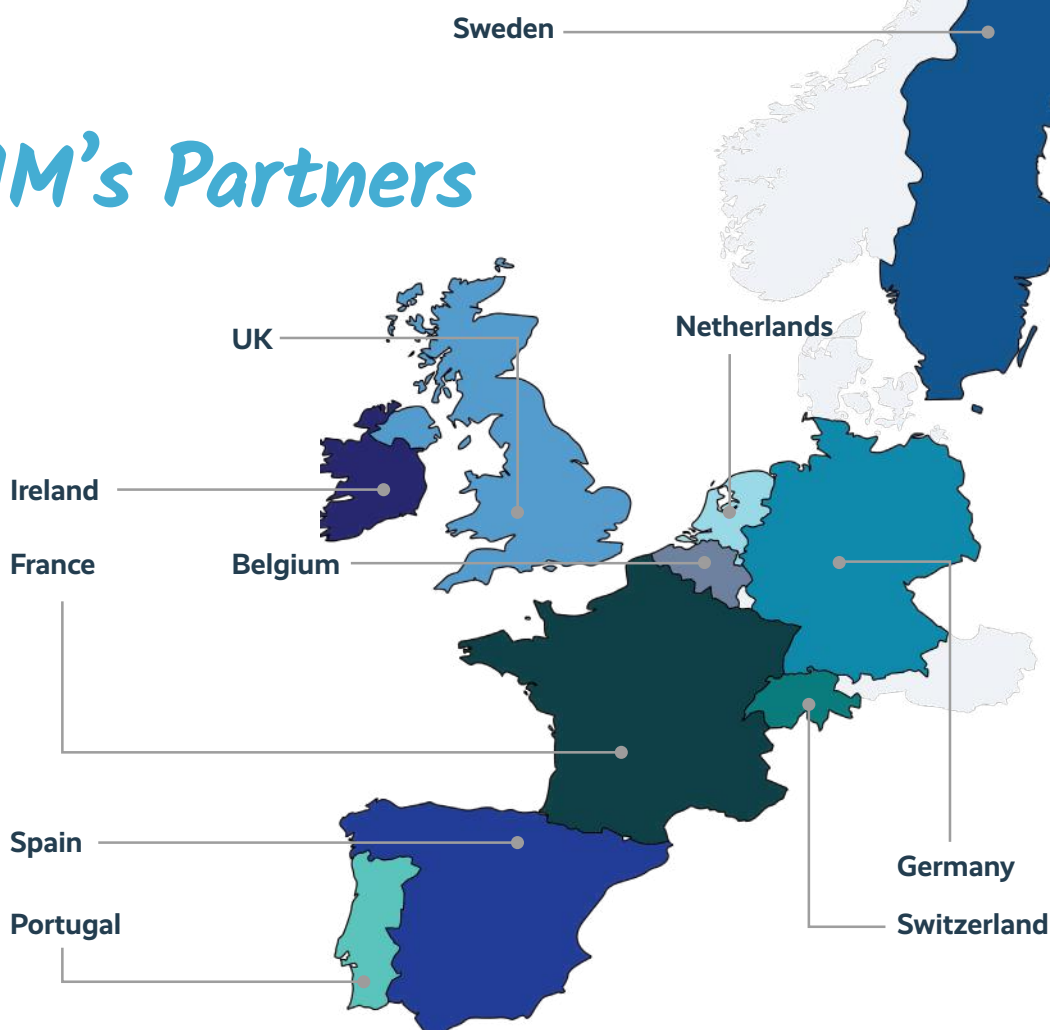
## 2022 Expenses and Areas of Focus\*

### Areas of Focus (% of Expenses)

● Discretionary Funds - Ukraine response	52%
● Future of Migration Governance	17%
● Children on the Move	11%
● Inclusion	9%
● Strategic Communications	5%
● Intra-EU Mobility	4%
● Discretionary Funds - Outside Ukraine Response	2%

\*Including grants extended from previous years

## 2. EPIM's Partners



### Belgium / EU

- Alliance4Europe
- Antigone Advocaten
- Confederation of Christian Trade Unions
- Democratic Society
- DRC Brussels
- European Citizen Action Service (ECAS)
- European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE)
- European Roma Grassroots Organisations Network
- FEANTSA - European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless

- JRS Belgium
- JRS Europe
- Liga voor Mensenrechten
- ORBIT vzw
- PICUM
- Platform Minors in Exile
- UNICEF

### France

- AADJAM
- Fédération de l'entraide protestante
- Fonds de Dotation Merci
- The Young Republic
- Union of Exiled Students
- Utopia 55

### Germany

- 1Blindspots e.V.
- International Women Space
- Rigardu e.V (BVMN)

### Ireland

- Migrant Rights Centre Ireland

### Netherlands

- European Sex Workers Rights Alliance
- International Child Development Initiatives - ICDI
- Profundo Research Foundation
- Stichting Lighthouse Reports

### Portugal

- CGTP General Confederation of Portuguese Workers

### Spain

- European Women's Lawyers Association (EWLA)
- Fundación Cepaim
- No Name Kitchen
- Red Acoge

### Sweden

- Afghan Women Organization (Sweden)
- Voices of Young Refugees in Europe

### Switzerland

- CCSI + Collectif Soutien Sans Papier Geneve

### UK

- Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants
- Safe Passage International

**Bosnia**

- DRC BiH

**Bulgaria**

- Center for Legal Aid – Voice in Bulgaria (CLA)
- Mission Wings Foundation

**Cyprus**

- Cyprus Refugee Council - CyRC

**Greece**

- DRC Greece
- Equal Rights Beyond Borders
- Generation 2.0 for Rights, Equality and Diversity
- Greek Council for Refugees
- Greek Forum of Refugees
- Human Rights 360
- Lesbos Solidarity
- MdM Greece
- Melissa Network
- Merimna
- METAdrasi
- Velos Youth

**Italy**

- Agevolando
- ASGI - Associazione per gli Studi Giuridici sull'Immigrazione
- Associazione NO CAP
- Chico Mendes
- Coalizione Italiana Libertà e Diritti Civili - CILD
- CSD Diaconia Valdese

- Danish Refugee Council Italia Onlus
- Oxfam Italy
- Progetto Diritti

**Malta**

- Aditus

**North Macedonia**

- Macedonian Young Lawyers Association (MYLA)

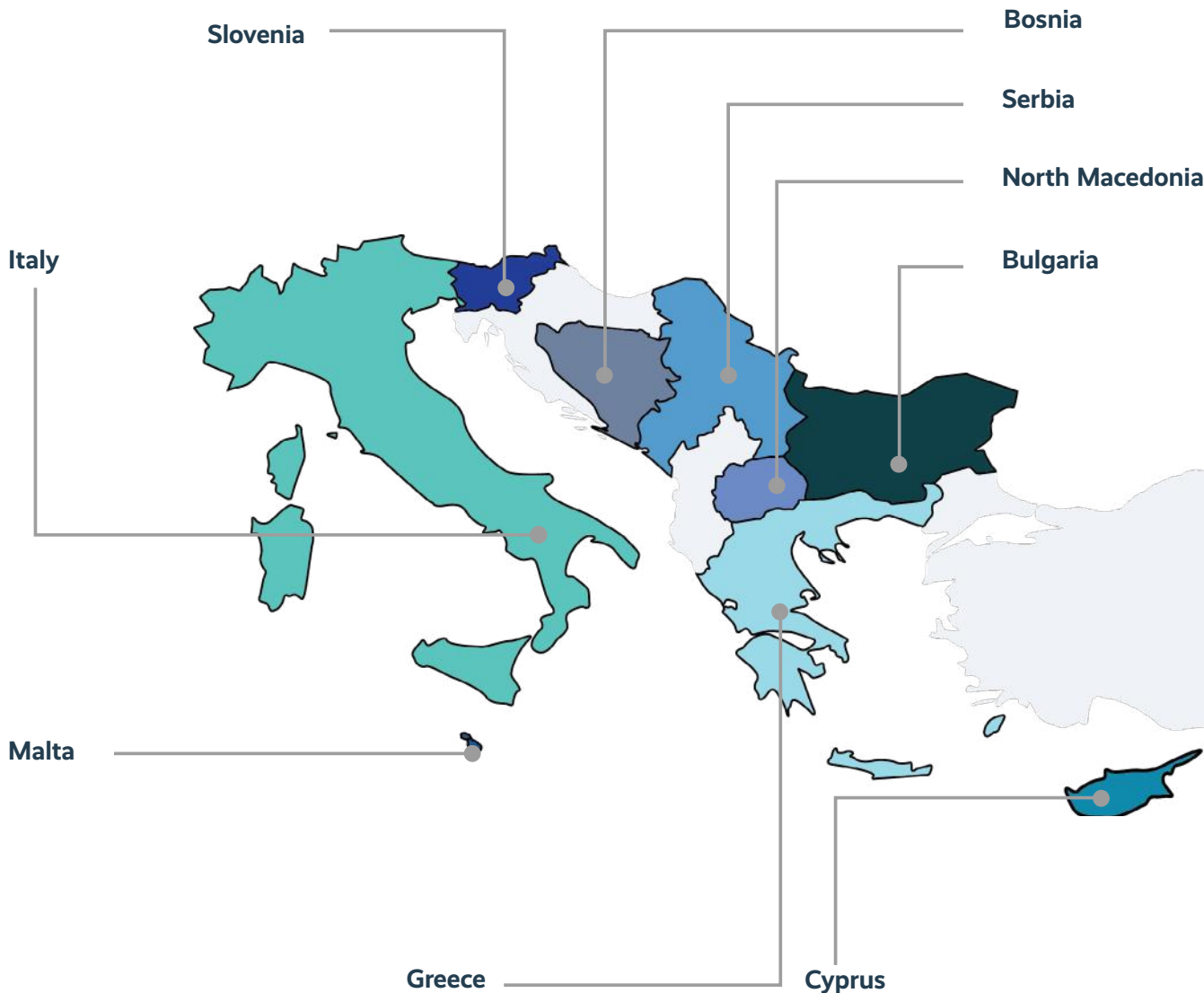
**Serbia**

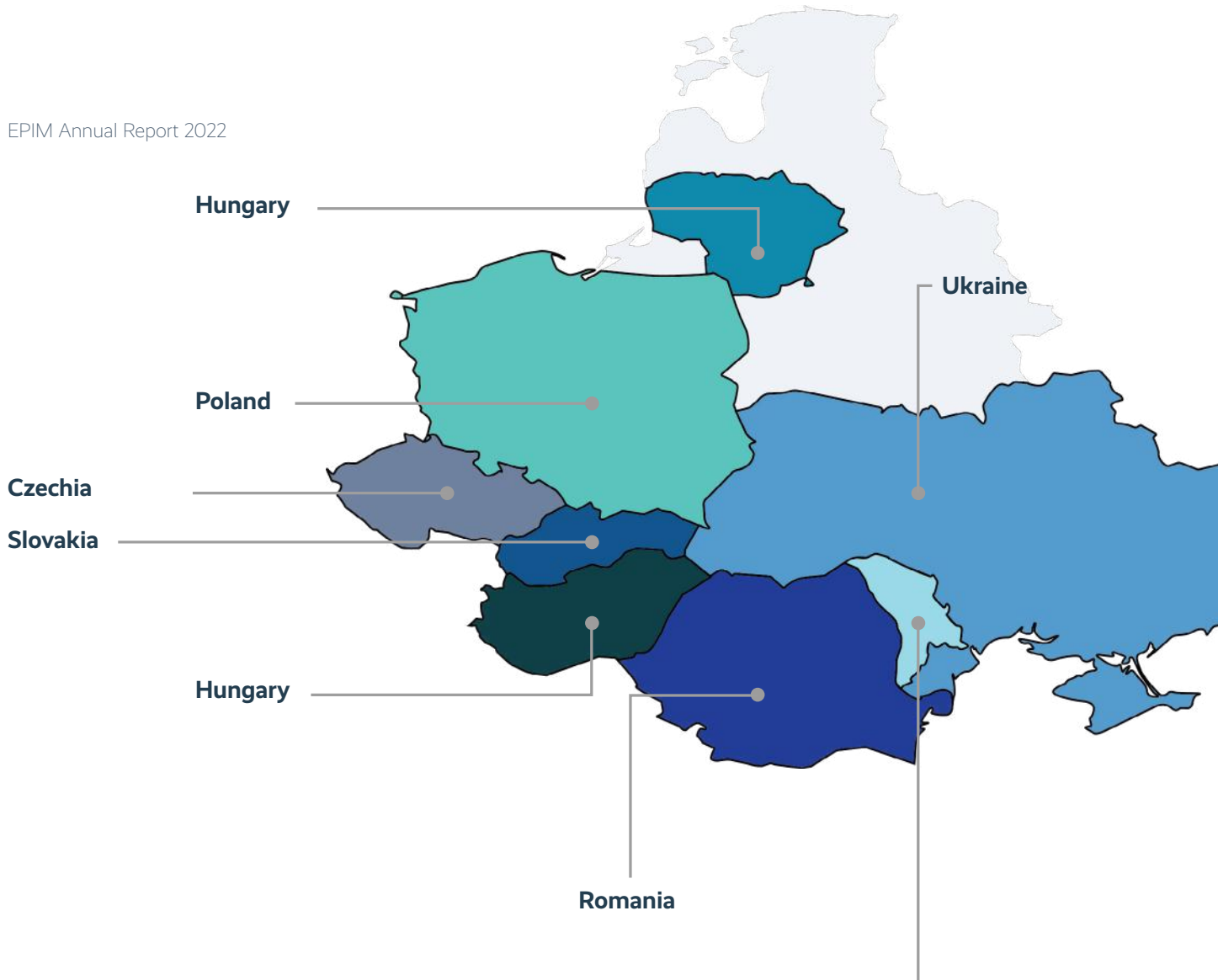
- Collective Aid Serbia

- Humanitarian Center for Integration and Tolerance (HCIT)

**Slovenia**

- Infokolpa





**Czechia**

- Agency for Migration and Adaptation AMIGA, z.s
- Association for Integration and Migration (SIMI)
- Caritas Czechia
- Consortium of Migrants Assisting Organisations
- Diaconia of the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren (ECCB) – Center of Relief and Development
- InBáze
- META, o.p.s
- MOST PRO
- Multicultural Centre Prague (MKC)
- NESEHNUTÍ
- Organisation for Aid to Refugees (OPU)
- Romodrom
- Slovo 21

**Hungary**

- From Streets to Homes Association
- Habitat for Humanity Hungary
- Hungarian Helsinki Committee
- Next Step (former MigHelp)
- Partners Hungary Foundation
- Romaversitas Alapitvány
- She4She (Hungary)

**Lithuania**

- Asociacija Human Constanta International
- Diversity Development Group

**Moldova**

- Roma Women Platform "ROMNI"

**Poland**

- Association for legal Intervention/ Stowarzyszenie Interwencji Prawnej
- Jaw Dikh Foundation
- Polish Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (HFHR)

**Romania**

- Asociatia Nevo Parudimos
- BUCOVINA association
- JRS Romania

**Slovakia**

- Roma advocacy and research center
- Skola Dokoran

**Ukraine**

- International Charitable Organization "Roma women fund "Chiricli"



# 3. How EPIM Makes a Difference?

## Highlight 1: A Major Strategic Litigation Victory for the Hungarian Helsinki Committee (HHC)

What do a [Russian woman](#) who's lived in Hungary for 21 years, an [Iraqi PhD student](#) living in Poland, and [Ludmiła Kozłowska](#), the President of the [Open Dialogue Foundation](#) have in common? All three have been considered threats to national security and risked seeing their refugee status withdrawn or their long-term residence status revoked based on classified data, withheld by authorities.

Since 2021, EPIM has supported [HHC's 'Right to Know' project](#) which sheds light on the arbitrary withdrawal of status and expulsions based on national security grounds in the EU. In a major victory, in September 2022, [the EU Court of Justice ruled](#) in an HHC-represented case that the practice of withdrawing protection status based on non-reasoned and binding opinions by security agencies, without clearly communicating the grounds on which this was done, to the person concerned, was in breach of EU law.

In 2022-2024, HHC will build on this first success and work with allies to create consensus and standards regarding the use of classified national security data in immigration and asylum cases.



"We believe this is a major victory for the rule of law and against the abuse of state power, which will have a direct impact on other EU member states who follow the same unlawful practice"

Gabor Gyulai, HHC

## Highlight 2: Safe Passage – Resettlement from Afghanistan

Following the Taliban take-over of Afghanistan in the summer of 2021, EPIM supported [Safe Passage International](#) and its Emergency Afghan Response Project to resettle children and families in France. EPIM's support allowed Safe Passage to identify and develop partnerships with actors in Afghanistan to refer eligible cases to their France legal team for immediate assistance. Safe Passage offered comprehensive legal support to Afghan families, provided interpreters for each interview, and financially supported the official translation of documents and covered the cost of visas.

Thanks to this project, 34 families comprising a total of 136 people including 63 children, were supported by 61 pro-bono lawyers from the beginning to the end of their visa application procedure to reach France safely. In addition, Safe Passage was able to respond to more than 250 requests for individual advice. Their work also allowed the development of a training manual for pro-bono lawyers, and a training course covering the essential elements of the manual which was attended by over 100 pro-bono lawyers.

"We have been able to fill a vital gap in the sector, ensuring access to family reunification for Afghan children and families seeking safety in France after fleeing Taliban rule. This initial crisis-response work would not have been possible without your support"

The Safe Passage team



### Highlight 3: The European Sex Workers' Rights Alliance (ESWA) - Shaping Conversations and Policies at the Local Level on Sex Work – An Interview with Sabrina Sanchez

In 2022-2024, EPIM will support [ESWA and their members](#) to initiate multistakeholder dialogues with local authorities to address the urgent housing needs of migrant sex workers in Europe. Sabrina Sanchez, Director of ESWA spoke to EPIM about the importance of self-organising and why access to decent housing for sex workers remains a struggle.

#### ESWA is a sex worker-led network, representing more than 100 organisations. Why is self-organisation and self-determination important to you and your partners?

Sex workers have historically been neglected and forgotten, by practically all institutional powers worldwide - from governments to religious bodies. This situation has meant that within the community, we have always sought to combat the abuses and injustices we face daily, as well as to take care of ourselves and organise our work. Contrary to popular belief, sex workers are political subjects with agency and self-determination and are able to voice our needs and solutions to improve our living conditions.

The most recent example was during the COVID pandemic and ensuing lockdowns. As our work was not recognised as such, we were marginalised and not able to receive many of the benefits and aid that were given to the rest of the working population, leaving it to us, ourselves, to collect funds through crowdfunding and organise their redistribution amongst the community. We saw this happen in France, Spain, Ireland, Belgium, Italy, North Macedonia, and Greece, to name a few contexts within ESWA.

Sabrina Sanchez, ESWA Director  
Photo: Trevor Lischka



The ESWA Team  
Photo: ESWA

#### What does the new EPIM grant and its focus on decent work and housing mean for ESWA and your partners?

Due to the lack of recognition of our work and the constant threat of criminalisation that we face, access to housing for sex workers is virtually impossible. This situation is exacerbated for migrants, racialised or LGBTIQ+ people. As a movement, we must reclaim the right to protected housing while simultaneously thinking and strategising with other collectives of people marginalised by the system and EPIM's grant will hopefully allow us to do this. In the same way, we must redouble our efforts to constitute ourselves as trade union organisations, especially in places where there is some regulation of our work, and really enforce efforts to frame sex work within a labour rights approach in Europe.

#### Can you tell us more about the multistakeholder dialogue you intend to create with local authorities, the police, NGOs and others in the context of this project?

Sex workers are no more of a monolith than any other group in the labour sector. The particularity of sex workers is the vulnerability of groups like trans women, who, since the times of Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson, have self-organised houses for LGBT youth expelled from their family homes. But it is time for the authorities to understand that they have a historical debt to communities persecuted by the state powers and to sit down and talk with us to make this happen because we alone do not have the power or the resources to make this possible. These are the multistakeholder dialogues we wish to create.



### Highlight 4: Prioritising Lived Migration Experience and Multistakeholder Partnerships through the Agency for Migration and Adaptation (AMIGA) and the Consortium of Migrant Assisting Organisations (KONSORCIUM) in Czechia

As part of its Ukraine response, EPIM will be supporting two strategic partnerships in Czechia led by a coalition of established civil society actors in the country. With a focus on mental health, education, counselling, and legal support, the two partnerships rely on multistakeholder partnerships across the country to support not just Ukrainians but other groups of migrants.

#### AMIGA

**AMIGA** is an entirely (women) migrant-led organisation based in Prague which focuses on mental health. Established by post-Soviet long-term residents of the city, part of its unique approach includes working with Ukrainian mental health professionals themselves, psychotherapy, and the creation of support groups for the elderly, teenagers, women, relatives of army personnel, as well as mental health resilience trainings for Ukrainian community leaders, teachers and healthcare professionals. AMIGA is providing its services in collaboration with the health services of the city of Prague. In addition, as part of EPIM's ecosystem building activities additional co-funding was raised from the Shapiro Foundation and Choose Love to be provided to AMIGA directly.

“Thanks to EPIM funding, we can continue with our advocacy and analytical work, whose scope and impact have increased significantly. EPIM's support comes at a crucial moment when emergency funding has dried out while the needs are acute. 2023 will be key for the successful integration of Ukrainian refugees into Czech society.”

**Barbara Chrzova, Policy Officer**

#### KONSORCIUM

EPIM will also be supporting **KONSORCIUM**, an umbrella organisation in Czechia which will act as a re-granter and liaison, supporting 9 other key partners working in Prague and across the country. The project aims to ensure continuation of information and communications work and provide services and assistance to Ukrainian refugees. Areas of focus include legal advice and assistance service, the coordination of psychosocial support, language classes, integration, and job support, as well as advocacy work to shape local and national policies that impact all migrants, in the long-term. EPIM's support will also help Konsorcium and its members strengthen their safeguarding policy and support 30 positions for intercultural workers, lawyers, experts, advocacy officers and coordinators across the country.

“With funding from EPIM, AMIGA will be able to continuously coordinate a complex system of psychosocial support for refugees from Ukraine, that it developed last year. AMIGA provides individual psychological support to adult and child refugees, as well as help with accessing healthcare services in Czechia, and runs a myriad of mental health-focused group programs for all ages”

**Masha Volynsky, AMIGA**



Konsorcium Meeting  
Photo: Konsorcium



### Highlight 5: YREMASUD (Young Refugees, Exiled, Migrants, Asylum Seekers and Undocumented) makes history by creating [VOICIFY](#), the first-ever European Forum for Youth with Lived Migration Experience

In November 2022, youth representatives from 35 organisations based in 16 European countries and representing more than 100,000 young people with lived migration experience, established the first-ever European self-representation structure for young migrants. The launch followed the first-ever consultation of YREMASUD-led organisations which [shed light](#) on the challenges they face. EPIM has been amongst the first funders to support YREMASUD's self-organising efforts in the context of its Children and Youth on the Move Fund. The creation of VOICIFY is a building block towards the greater representation of people with lived experience across Europe and thus, better democracies.



‘We are standing up as an integral part of Europe, building our own political power, organising and taking control over our own voices, lives and destinies’

**The VOICIFY Team**



VOICIFY European Forum  
Photo: YREMASUD

## 4. Key Developments Across EPIM

### Staff and Committee Appointments

EPIM's team and the Executive and Steering Committee saw several changes in 2022. In May, EPIM engaged Senior Programme Consultant, Hrishabh Sandilya, to shape its work on narrative change and the Thematic Fund on Strategic Communications, as well as to engage in and co-shape EPIM's Process of Change. In the Summer, the team bid goodbye to long-time programme managers Stephan Burger and Fanny Georges. And in November, EPIM recruited its first Budget and Grants Manager, Rosario Alioto, to lead its budget, grant-making and develop learning frameworks.

EPIM's Executive Committee saw Tim Parritt (Oak Foundation) and Hugo Seabra (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation) rotating out, and Tim Verbist (Porticus Foundation) leaving both the Executive and Steering Committee. Ali Torabi (Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust) joined the Executive Committee where he will serve with EPIM Chair Raphaela Schweiger (Robert Bosch Foundation) and Job Rijneveld (Adessium Foundation). And Audrey Guichon (Porticus Foundation) replaced Tim Verbist on the Steering Committee.

### Embarking on a Process of Change

Supported by the Steering Committee, EPIM embarked on a wide-ranging Process of Change in the Spring of 2022, anticipating the end of the programmatic cycle in 2023 and accelerated by the changing European displacement context and the implementation of EPIM's Ukraine Response.

The POC will last 18 months, looking at the *why, how, and what* of EPIM as a collaborative fund, to rethink its mission and vision, grant-making and governance structures and build on the achievements of the past to strengthen its impact going forward.

The process is being driven by the EPIM team, with the support and expertise of an external advisory group, the Executive Committee, and other subject matter experts, including Modern Grantmaking, and external facilitators from the Open Space Collective

### Developments in the Thematic Fund on Shaping the Future of European Migration Governance

EPIM awarded three continuation grants to the PRAB (Protecting Rights at Borders) initiative led by the [DRC](#), to the [BVMN](#) and HHC. The projects respectively aim to address rights compliance and accountability at the EU's internal and external borders, provide insight and evidence on the use of artificial intelligence at the borders in Southern Europe and address the abuse of blanket security reasons in deportation and asylum procedures across the bloc. Further, as part of the strand focusing on the nexus between technology and borders, EPIM joined forces with the [European AI Fund](#) to host an exploratory online convening that brought together digital rights activists and migrant rights actors in the Spring. Going forward, EPIM hopes to build on that convening as well as other exchanges with actors in the field to shape its support strategically.

Finally, [CLA \(Bulgaria\)](#), [CyRC \(Cyprus\)](#), [SIP \(Poland\)](#), [CILD \(Italy\)](#) and [HR360 \(Greece\)](#), began the implementation of their Alternatives to Detention (ATD) initiatives which were approved in 2021. In parallel, [IDC](#) will continue steering the work of the European [ATD Network](#) to build on the work of the ATD pilots to date and ensure that they become embedded within national level migration management systems.

### Developments in the Thematic Fund on the Long-term Prospects and Protection of Children on the Move in Europe

In the context of the Thematic Fund's 2021-2023 strategy, EPIM is focussing on supporting advocacy coalitions of CSOs to address obstacles and promote best practices around migrant children and youth's transition to adulthood. In addition to supporting an advocacy coalition at EU level, EPIM will support national advocacy coalitions in Italy, Greece and France. Grants have been awarded to HumanRights360 in Greece, [Oxfam](#) in Italy, [PICUM](#) at European level and most recently [Utopia56](#) in France.





## Developments in the Thematic Fund on Communicating Migration in a Changing Environment

The Thematic Fund adopted a new strategy for the period 2021-2024, which will support national coalitions, including organisations and movements (co-)driven by people with lived migration experience to strategically engage public discourse on migration within their national contexts. EPIM will complement this with exchange and peer learning at European level. Supported by an expert consultative group, an [open call to support projects to transform narratives around migration](#), was published in Spring 2022. Out of a 127 received applications, EPIM will ultimately support four projects - coalitions led by [Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen](#) in Belgium, [IMIX](#) in the UK and a coalition each in Poland and Italy.

## Developments in the Thematic Fund on Protecting Access to Rights for Mobile EU Citizens

EPIM confirmed continuation grants to [ECAS](#) and [FEANTSA](#). Their projects will respectively aim to remove legal and administrative challenges faced by mobile EU citizens and their non-EU family members and improve the condition of mobile EU citizens experiencing destitution across Europe. In September 2022, EPIM brought together 20 civil society representatives from across the Channel in Brussels, to address the challenges that UK citizens in the EU and EU citizens in the UK face post-Brexit, and thus mirroring ongoing government engagement (see the Section 5).

## Developments in the Thematic Fund for Building Inclusive European Societies

Following its [Call for Proposals on 'Decent Work and Adequate Housing' for All](#), EPIM [selected the following projects for funding](#). All focus specifically on ecosystem building and involve collaborations across sectors, as well as between CSOs and other actors, including local authorities, the corporate sector, and trade unions.

- [Chico Mendes](#), in collaboration with [Associazione NOCAP](#), aims to enhance the collaboration throughout the agri-food chain between local NGOs, agricultural cooperatives, producer associations to end the labour exploitation of migrants in Calabria (Italy) and beyond.

NOCAP Gathering 2022  
Photo: NOCAP

- [Fond the Dotation Merci](#) is piloting a project to revitalise a municipality in France with the involvement of public authorities, citizen initiatives, and refugees to turn it into a model that could be scaled.
- The [ESWA](#) will establish multistakeholder dialogues to ensure the meaningful inclusion of sex workers in policymaking to improve the situation of those among them who are at risk of evictions, homelessness, exploitation and trafficking.
- In Belgium, [ORBIT vzw](#) will use the current momentum of civilian solidarity with Ukraine and seek to expand some of the innovative and advantageous policies to all of newcomers while also using the organisation's established methods in offering support in setting up new local refugee housing associations.
- In Hungary, besides offering immediate support to children and families displaced from Ukraine, [Next Step](#) will address barriers to decent work and adequate housing, through collaboration with the private sector.

Next Step  
Community  
Announcement  
Photo: Next Step



## EPIM's Response to the Ukraine Crisis

EPIM put forward its Discretionary Fund mechanism to pool additional funding to respond to the needs that are arising, and will arise, from the Ukraine crisis in Europe, aimed at supporting all those fleeing the war in Ukraine. Thanks to the trust and support of Open Society Foundations, Robert Bosch Foundation, Fondation de France, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Adessium, Compagnia di San Paolo, Kahane Foundation, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and Porticus Foundation, EPIM raised €4.8 million in early 2022.

EPIM adopted a flexible approach funding projects that focussed on access to housing, education, employment, legal and psycho-social aid and supporting actors of all shapes and sizes, from tiny collaboratives to large umbrella organisations. So far, EPIM confirmed a total of 18 grants to local, regional, national and transnational projects in Central and eastern Europe, Greece, the U.K. and France committing €2.9 million in 2022.

ERGO Mission in CZ  
Photo: ERGO Network



## 5. Beyond Grantmaking: Building Connections and Alignment

### Towards a Community of Practice (COP) on Systemic Racism and Migration (Spring and Fall 2022)

EPIM brought together civil society actors from the migration, anti-racism and social policy spaces, as well as researchers and journalists to exchange on the nexus between systemic racism and migration, including related opportunities, challenges and risks in Spring and Fall 2022. These conversations will evolve into a COP aiming to:

- Encourage exchanges on experiences of mobilisation, campaigning and advocacy on systemic racism and migration

- Connect sectoral experts from areas such as social policies, migration, anti-racism with different types of actors including CSOs, media, researchers, policymakers, funders etc.)
- Discuss possible actions, solidarity, and movement-building on the topic

The intersection between systemic racism and migration as a topic is one in which actors sit on very different ends of the spectrum and there is a clear need for a space for safe engagement. Sensing this need on the ground and building upon the trust EPIM has gained over the years, the team hopes to prototype this approach in other areas in the future.



European Summit of Refugees and Migrants  
Photo: Trevor Lischka





Forum 2000  
Photo: Rachel Danna

### **Roundtable on The Way Forward for Ukrainian Refugees in the CEE at the Forum 2000 Conference in Prague (August 2022)**

At the end of August 2022, EPIM hosted a roundtable at the Forum 2000 Conference in Prague, on 'The Way Forward for Ukrainian Refugees in the CEE'. Framed within the context of EPIM's Ukraine Response, the roundtable featured Anna Brabcová from the Czech Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Markus Lux from the Robert Bosch Stiftung and Nadiia Ivanova from People in Need, who underlined the following key aspects:

- Respecting the agency of Ukrainians as they move across borders
- Focussing support on an expected winter housing shortfall and a cost-of-living crisis.
- The need for better coordination and knowledge-sharing between actors, across CEE
- The need for more multisectoral and multistakeholder alliances.
- Acknowledging the tremendous civil society response in CEE and the lessons this may hold for societies in the region, on refugee issues and more broadly.

### **Post-Brexit Convening in Brussels (September 2022)**

The EPIM post-Brexit convening in September 2022 underlined the need for peer-to-peer support and intelligence sharing amongst CSOs. Participants made connections, shared challenges and learnings working on citizens' rights issues, and identified possible action pathways. These included rethinking the narrative around citizens' rights and how they could form part of the broader migrants' rights movement, continuous cross-border collaboration, as well as engagement with civil society and public actors to gather intelligence and build trust.

The event was entirely led by CSOs and reinforced the need to nurture civil society solidarity spaces for high-level influencing, community organising and narrative change, despite the continued competition for funding. It also underlined EPIM's unparalleled role as a convenor in the sector – with its bird's eye view of needs, common challenges, inspiring practices, and possible solutions across Europe.

Post-Brexit Convening  
Photo: EPIM



## 6. Reflections and Learnings from Our Work This Year

### Fund Flexibly, Build Alliances and Trust First

The rapid deployment of the Ukraine Response provided the EPIM team the opportunity to prototype a different approach to grantmaking on migration – one that was trust-based, bottom-up and invested in actively listening to stakeholders on the ground. It entailed slowing down and talking to many different actors to see the big picture and take a more holistic approach. The approach also highlighted the need to create multistakeholder alliances – efforts that are not dependent on a single institution and that have buy-in from a collective who are invested in its success. These are vital to address deeper systemic challenges like migrant housing, employment, and education, that intersect with existing social challenges. It is evident that these initiatives are a critical missing link in the integration story and will lead to better inclusion policies for newcomers and a reframed discourse, allowing for a focus beyond Ukrainians. Milica Petrovic [reflected on the approach and the learnings for not just philanthropic actors in this insightful piece](#). Going forward, EPIM will adopt many of these learnings into the way it does its grantmaking and will prioritise movements and alliances as levers for change.

### The Need for a Long-Term Perspective: Ukrainians in CEE

Building on the freedom the Ukraine Response provided to work bottom-up, EPIM strategically convened and gathered a variety of actors working on the subject throughout 2022. This activity provided valuable insight into what lay in store for the CEE region and the demands on policymakers, funders and those responsible for ensuring Ukrainian refugees remain supported. [These insights are captured in this succinct brief put together by Hrishabh Sandilya and the Forum 2000 Foundation](#). The challenges are manifold: stakeholders need to dig in for the long run, giving Ukrainian refugees the agency, they desire and a seat at the decision-making table. This needs to be supplemented by more multistakeholder partnerships, greater investments in local communities and a holistic approach to sharing

knowledge within the region to ensure lasting impact. Going forward, EPIM expects to organise further convenings and opportunities for learning and exchange in 2023 in the CEE region on Ukraine.

### Rethinking Open Calls

Listening to the feedback from the numerous applicants to the two open calls EPIM announced in 2022 (transforming migration narratives and decent work and housing for all) and our past experience with them, the EPIM team is increasingly seeing that open calls for proposals have their limitations. They are an imperfect tool given their limited reach - essentially those audiences that funders already have access to, they result in an almost inevitable exclusion of certain types of organisations like grassroots groups and are a significant drain on applicants' resources and time. [For more, see this reflection piece from Sophie Ngo-Diep on the learnings from the decent work and housing open call](#).

### There is No Alternative to Lived Experience

Far too much decision making takes place without those who are impacted and challenged by migration systems the most – migrants and refugees themselves. Evidence from other movements including the disability rights and gender spaces has shown us that people with lived experience not only have a better idea of what is wrong and unjust, they are also best placed to respond to challenges and reimagine solutions. [As Sophie- Ngo Diep notes in this thought-provoking missive written on the occasion of International Migrants Day \(Dec 18\)](#), “focusing on lived instead of learned expertise ensures that policies, funding, and social actions are grounded in the reality of the communities they aim to serve.” Centring and amplifying lived migration experience has been one of the driving forces behind EPIM's POC and will be a pillar of our work going forward.