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COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

EVALUATION

Accompanying the document

**REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE
COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE
COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

Report on the evaluation of the European Migration Network 2018-2021

{COM(2026) 322 final}

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Glossary

<i>Term or acronym</i>	<i>Meaning or definition</i>
AHQ	Ad hoc queries
AHQ WG	Ad Hoc Query Working Group
AMIF	Asylum Migration and Integration Fund
ARMs	Annual reports on migration and asylum
ARM WG	Annual Reports on Migration and Asylum Working Group
CD WG	Communication and Dissemination Working Group
CdT	Translation Centre for the Bodies of the European Union
CEAS	Common European Asylum System
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EASO	European Asylum Support Office
EEAS	European External Action Service
EMN	European Migration Network
EQ	Evaluation questions
EU	European Union
EUAA	European Union Agency for Asylum
FRA	Fundamental Rights Agency
Frontex	European Border and Coast Guard Agency
GDISC	General Directors of Immigration Services Conference
GT WG	Glossary and Thesaurus Working Group
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
JRC	Joint Research Centre

KCMD	Knowledge Centre on Migration and Demography
NCP	National Contact Point
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
RT WG	Round Table Working Group
SB	Steering Board
TCNs	Third-country nationals
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose and scope of the evaluation

The European Migration Network is an EU-funded network, established by Council Decision 2008/381/EC¹ and amended by Regulation (EU) No 516/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council, with the aim of collecting and sharing information on migration and asylum in the EU.

Under the provisions set out in the Council Decision 2008/381/EC (Article 13), the European Commission regularly presents to the European Parliament, the Council, and the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions a report on the development of the European Migration Network (EMN), based on an external and independent evaluation.

This evaluation report assesses the four-year period from 2018 to 2021. In terms of the geographical scope, it covered all EU Member States except for Denmark, as well as three third countries that are EMN Observers (Georgia, Moldova and Norway).

The evaluation focuses on the effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, EU added value and relevance of the European Migration Network. It also considers whether the mandate of the EMN is up-to-date and if it matches the objectives for which it was set up as well as the effectiveness of the changes to the scope of activities. It also reviews the working practices of the EMN and the EMN Service Provider, including information flow, and provides lessons learned and recommendations to better respond to the challenges posed to EMN by the constantly changing environment.

1.2 Methodology of the evaluation

The evaluation was supported by an independent study, completed in 2024², and a range of activities and products. Field research activities helped gather qualitative insights on how and why specific results had been achieved and identify lessons learned. The reliability and validity of results was ensured by applying a systematic triangulation of data and information collected through both desk and field sources.

The main limitations of the evaluation related to the timing differences between the period in which the evaluation was conducted (2023-2024) and the temporal scope of the evaluation (2018-2021). As some of the current National Contact Point members and/or Steering Board (SB) members who were interviewed in the course of evidence collection for the supporting evaluation study had not been involved in EMN activities between 2018 and 2021, they were not able to provide relevant first-hand feedback and information for the period under

¹ Council Decision of 14 May 2008 establishing a European Migration Network (2008/381/EC).

² The independent evaluation study was carried out by Ernst & Young and is pending publication.

evaluation. To mitigate this limitation, guidelines for targeted interviews with SB members were shared in advance to allow interviewees that were not involved in the EMN between 2018 and 2021 to be adequately briefed by former colleagues on activities between 2018 and 2021 or accompanied by them during the interviews.

The lack of availability of certain data on the type of costs incurred by National Contact Points (NCPs) when implementing EMN activities did not allow a full quantification of the costs of EMN activities. Cost quantification was therefore focused on the type of costs (i.e. staff, travel, drafting of ad hoc queries) for which financial data was available and budget allocations.

The evaluation acknowledged that the frequency of EMN evaluations, as prescribed by the Council Decision 2008/381/EC, presented methodological constraints, in particular regarding the limited availability of financial data, including budget allocations, as financial reporting is not available for a calendar year, but for the full duration of each EMN Work Programme. The non-alignment of EMN evaluations with EMN Work Programmes, as the evaluation period covered one Work Programme fully (2019-2020) and two Work Programmes partially (2017-2018, 2021-2022), made it unfeasible to derive a consistent 2018-2021 financial dataset. Consequently, the financial data presented in the evaluation, in part and as noted, included financial data for the years 2017 and 2022.

2. WHAT WAS THE EXPECTED OUTCOME OF THE INTERVENTION?

2.1 Description of the EMN and its objective

The aim of the European Migration Network is to collect and share information on migration and asylum in the EU. Articles 1 and 2(1) of the Council Decision 2008/381/EC identify the EMN objective and tasks, which are translated into activities listed and defined in EMN work programmes that are drafted and approved jointly by the EMN and the Commission³. According to that Council Decision, the objective of the EMN is ‘to meet the information needs of Community institutions and of Member States’ authorities and institutions on migration and asylum, by providing up-to-date, objective, reliable and comparable information on migration and asylum, with a view to supporting policy-making in the European Union in these areas. The EMN also serves to provide the general public with information on these subjects.

The internal structure of the EMN is outlined in the Council Decision, which provides for clear roles and responsibilities of the different Network’s components. In the evaluation

³ The EMN work programmes were biennial until 2022. https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/funding/asylum-migration-and-integration-funds/european-migration-network-emn_en.

period the EMN was composed of representatives of the Commission, 26 Member States⁴, and three observers: Norway, which joined in 2011, and Moldova and Georgia, which joined in 2021. The various Network components were interlinked through both top-down and bottom-up mechanisms. The top-down dimension involves the following actors:

- The Steering Board that plays executive and monitoring roles and provides strategic guidance. In particular, pursuant to Article 4 of the Council Decision, the Steering Board is responsible for leading the EMN political and strategic management and comprises:
 - one representative from each Member State⁵;
 - one representative from the European Commission acting as chair;
 - two scientific experts;
 - one representative of the European Parliament, who can participate as an observer in the SB meetings.
- The Commission, which coordinates the NCPs' activities and ensures that the EMN objectives and actions reflect EU's political priorities (Article 6 of the Council Decision);
- The Service Provider, which assists the Commission and provides secretarial support for the EMN's day-to-day activities;
- The NCPs designated by the Member States in coordination with the Commission that play the two-fold role of contributing to the design of the work programmes (policy-design role) and implementing them (operational role). Each NCP is composed of at least three experts, one of which should act as 'national coordinator'.

The NCPs act as the interconnection with the EMN bottom-up dimension represented by the National Migration Networks that are established and coordinated by each NCP. The networks comprise expert organisations (e.g. NGOs, scientific and research institutes, public administration institutions) and individuals active in the field of migration and asylum, who facilitate the exchange of information among national actors, offer better understanding and response to information needs, and provide up-to-date and accurate information to the EMN for EU-level analysis and reports.

In addition, the Council Decision envisaged a further layer to the EMN governance, by providing for horizontal mechanisms (the EMN meetings) aimed at ensuring regular communication and information exchange among the Network's members⁶.

⁴ Denmark did not take part in the adoption of the Council Decision and is not bound by it or subject to its application.

⁵ Each Member State appoints a representative to the Steering Board who is an institutional actor with specific expertise in the field of migration and asylum at the national level.

⁶ Pursuant to Article 4(6), the SB should meet at least twice a year, allowing for exchanges among its national members. Moreover, Article 7 provides that the EMN should meet at least five times a year, thus allowing

The EMN developed external coordination mechanisms with EU agencies (such as the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA), the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex)), Commission's bodies and networks (such as the European Return and Reintegration Network), as well as international and civil society organisations.

2.2 EMN outputs⁷

The outputs of the EMN include providing various products, holding internal meetings, and organising events. EMN written deliverables are managed and shared through the Information Exchange System (IES), a state-of-the-art secure web platform with access restriction. At the national level, EMN NCPs engage in information sharing through their national EMN websites, conferences, social media, newsletters, and other events.

2.3 Points of comparison

The evaluation was aimed at capturing the changes that the EMN had brought to the area of migration and asylum over the evaluation period. To this end, EMN performance between 2018 and 2021 was evaluated against specific points of comparison:

- the explanatory memorandum accompanying the proposal for a Council Decision establishing the EMN⁸ with a view to identify the needs underlying the establishment of the Network;
- the 2015 EMN evaluation to understand the progress of the EMN over the two evaluation periods⁹.

for regular exchanges among NCPs. The Commission acts as chair of both SB and NCP meetings, which are all also attended by the Service Provider.

⁷ A detailed list of EMN outputs produced can also be found in EMN Status Reports published annually: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/european-migration-network-emn/emn-publications/emn-status-reports_en.

⁸ European Commission (2008), Proposal for a Council Decision establishing the European Migration Network, COM(2007) 466 final.

⁹ Independent external evaluation of the European Migration Network. Final report. (2015).

3. HOW HAS THE SITUATION EVOLVED OVER THE EVALUATION PERIOD?

3.1 Background and context of the evaluation

3.1.1 Main trends in asylum and migration and key factors

Between 2018 and 2021, the number of asylum applications in the EU were strongly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting global mobility disruptions. Irregular arrivals during this period also fluctuated, with detections decreasing when mobility channels were constrained and increasing again as restrictions eased. Geopolitical developments, including the Belarus-border crisis, also had an impact on the movement of migrants.

Legal migration remained comparatively stable over between 2018 and 2021 but was shaped by temporary labour market needs and administrative adaptations introduced during the pandemic. Work-related, family-related and education-related residence permits continued to constitute the main legal pathways, while seasonal and other employment-related mobility remained important. Member States introduced targeted measures to address labour shortages, ensure continuity of residence for workers already present and adapt procedures through remote processing, online platforms and wider use of digital tools. Large-scale EU IT systems such as the Eurodac¹⁰ continued to support border, migration and asylum management, and labour-market integration outcomes for EU nationals and third-country nationals remained stable throughout the period.

3.1.2 Relevant policy developments

Between 2018 and 2021, several EU initiatives contributed to shaping the policy and operational framework in the area of migration and asylum. The Commission presented the Pact on Migration and Asylum¹¹, comprising a set of legislative proposals and accompanying non-legislative measures aimed at establishing a more effective and predictable EU system. The revised EU Blue Card Directive (Directive 2021/1883/EU)¹² introduced updated rules for the admission and residence of highly qualified workers from third countries. The implementation of the 2015-2020 EU action plan against migrant smuggling continued to support efforts to prevent and combat smuggling in line with the European Agenda on

¹⁰ Eurodac was originally created in 2000 (Regulation (EC) No 2725/2000) and has been operating since 2003. Its current legal basis is Regulation (EU) No 603/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013.

¹¹ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on A New Pact on Migration and Asylum (COM/2020/609 Final). Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0609>.

¹² Directive (EU) 2021/1883 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 October 2021 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purpose of highly qualified employment, and repealing Council Directive 2009/50/EC. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32021L1883-:~:text=DIRECTIVE%20%28EU%29%202021%2F1883%20OF%20THE%20EUROPEAN%20PARLIAMENT%20AND,highly%20qualified%20employment%2C%20and%20repealing%20Council%20Directive%202009%2F50%2FEC>.

Migration¹³ and the European Agenda on Security¹⁴. In 2020, the Commission also established the Migration Preparedness and Crisis Blueprint Mechanism¹⁵ as the EU's structured framework for preparedness, monitoring, situational awareness and coordinated response in the field of migration. Over the same period, the mandates of EUAA, FRA and Frontex were established or strengthened, enhancing their roles in supporting Member States and EU institutions in the fields of asylum, fundamental rights and integrated border management.

3.2 State of play in the EMN 2018-2021

3.2.1 EMN meetings and events

The evaluation confirmed that EMN meetings and events were carried out in full accordance with the work programmes¹⁶. SB and NCP meetings were held regularly. In 2021, two additional SB meetings were organised due to the urgency of issues to be addressed (including the impact of COVID-19 pandemic and the tensions at the EU external border with Belarus). The establishment of new Working Groups between 2018 and 2021¹⁷ led to an increase in the number of meetings during the analysed period.

¹³ Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_15_4956.

¹⁴ Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A52015DC0240>.

¹⁵ Commission Recommendation (EU) 2020/1366 of 23 September 2020 on an EU mechanism for preparedness and management of crises related to migration. Available at: [EUR-Lex - 32020H1366 - EN - EUR-Lex](#).

¹⁶ Independent external evaluation of the European Migration Network 2018-2021. Final report.

¹⁷ In 2018, the Information and Awareness Raising Campaigns Working Group (INFO WG) was established and the EMN Statistics Working Group was re-instated to discuss how the EMN's ambition to present comparable statistics could be achieved because different migration and asylum-related statistics were being generated due to lack of alignment among the national data collection systems. In 2020, the International Cooperation Working Group (ICWG) and the round tables Working Group started their activities. Finally, a new ad hoc Working Group was established in 2021 to supervise the production of an EMN corporate video showcasing the progress of the Network since its 10th anniversary (in 2018).

Table 1 Planned vs actual meetings and events (2018-2021)

Output	Planned per year	2018	2019	2020	2021
SB meetings	2 ¹⁸	2	2	2	4
NCP meetings	At least 5 ¹⁹	7	7	6	7
WG meetings	-- ²⁰	11	10	23	17
Conferences	2	2	2	3	2
EMN Day ²¹	1	--	--	1	1
Round tables ²²	0	--	--	2	3

Source: Independent external evaluation of the European Migration Network 2018-2021. Final report.

In addition to the twice-yearly EMN conferences, in 2019 two conferences at the EU level were co-organised by the EMN and the Council of Europe and the OECD, respectively. Due to pandemic-related travel restrictions the events were held virtually, which contributed to greater participation. Phasing in virtual and hybrid meetings facilitated wider participation and helped reduce attendance costs²³.

In 2020 and 2021, the EMN Days were the EMN's most attended events, with around 300 participants. In 2020 two round tables were organised for the first time, while in 2021 three round tables were held in cooperation with the World Bank to discuss i.e. legal pathways and circular migration.

Networking and information sharing by NCPs at the national level were steadily growing throughout the evaluation period. Whilst most 2018 events were limited to national conferences, in subsequent years the range of events grew to include round tables, migration talks, workshops, educational seminars and webinars, study forums, and screening of documentaries²⁴.

3.2.2 Budget

The EMN is co-financed from Commission's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF). The EMN budget (as indicated in Table 2) is distributed through grants allocated to NCPs, procurement (including allocations for the EMN Service Provider, and for communication services and evaluation studies), other actions (including allocations for the

¹⁸ As established by Article 4(6) of the Council Decision.

¹⁹ As established by Article 5(6) of the Council Decision.

²⁰ The frequency of the WG meetings depends on the specific needs of each WG: usually, at the end of a WG meeting, participants decide when to meet the next time.

²¹ The EMN Day was started in 2020.

²² The round tables were started in 2020 as dialogue-based events to promote open learning with the aim to bring together innovative thinkers and stakeholders to clarify viewpoints and to offer a space for exchange of perspectives on challenging issues.

²³ Independent external evaluation of the European Migration Network 2018-2021. Final report.

²⁴ Idem.

Joint Research Centre and IT services), and indirect management (for international organisations and assimilated entities).

As EMN allocations are reported per work programme, they are available only in biannual aggregates and cannot be disaggregated by calendar year. Consequently, the analysis necessarily included data from 2017 and 2022, which fall outside the evaluation period.

The allocated amounts are jointly agreed by the EMN and the Commission for the implementation of each work programme. Based on a Steering Board decision, EMN grants are awarded to NCPs and operationalised in the work programmes. The maximum EU co-financing of the EMN grants is 95%. Following the Commission’s approval, the NCPs receive an advance payment of up to 80% of the allocated budget, while the remaining amount can be released following reporting of the expenses. Allocated resources that have not been exhausted are returned to AMIF at the end of the work programme.

Unlike EU Member States, EMN Observer Countries cover the entirety of the costs of their involvement in the EMN from their respective national budgets.

Grants for the NCPs constitute the bulk of the EMN budget and they are given on the basis of a call for proposals for each of the work programmes and the signing of grant agreements. The implementation of the grants is monitored by the Commission and the reporting obligations on the implementation apply to all the NCPs.

Overall, grants awarded to the NCPs increased from 78% of the total EMN allocation in 2017-2018 to 87% in 2019-2020, and then decreased to 69% in 2021-2022. Procurement decreased from 20% in 2017-2018 to 8% in 2019-2020 and then increased up to 13% in the period 2021-2022. Finally, the budget allocated for other actions consistently grew in the evaluation period.²⁵

Table 2 – EMN budget allocation²⁶

Period	Total allocation	Grants	Procurements	Other actions	Indirect management
2017-18	€24 240 000	€18 910 000	€4 780 000	€550 000	n.a.
2019-20	€18 075 000	€15 640 000	€1 400 000	€1 035 000	n.a.
2021-22	€22 976 000	€15 962 000	€3 100 000	€1 500 000	€2 414 000

Source: Independent external evaluation of the European Migration Network 2018-2021. Final report.

The grants covered the costs of participation in EMN meetings, production of national contributions to EMN products, management of the AHQs, organisation of public events and dissemination activities at the national level.

²⁵ Member State–level allocation, award, and spending information is provided in Annex IV.

²⁶ EMN budget allocation is presented as the data on actual budget implementation in the evaluation period is not yet available.

With regard to grant awards²⁷, the 2019-2020 work programme recorded an overall increase compared with the preceding period, whereas allocations in the subsequent work programme remained broadly stable and, in some Member States, declined.

The average level of grant spending rate by NCPs²⁸ was around 85% of the maximum grant amount in the 2017-2018 and 2019-2020 work programmes. The EMN grants closed to date under the 2021-2022 work programme have a budget implementation rate of 78%. The reason for the relative low level of implementation was directly linked to pandemic-related restrictions which first led to the cancellation of travel and then to the reduction of travel overall, with the NCPs resorting more to online meetings..

4. EVALUATION FINDINGS

Key findings:

- EMN’s mandate and objectives remained relevant to EU and national information needs throughout 2018–2021.
- EMN delivered a steady output of reports, ad hoc queries, and events, despite varying national administrative structures and changing policy priorities.
- EMN continued to provide comparable, up-to-date information that supported evidence-based policy discussions at both EU and national levels.

This *ex post* evaluation assesses the performance of the EMN against the following five criteria: effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, EU added value, and relevance. The overall analysis is based on evidence from both the Evaluation Study and the Commission’s own sources. The analysis draws on the indicators presented in Annex III, including quantitative output indicators where available.

4.1 To what extent was the intervention successful and why?

4.1.1 Effectiveness

Key findings:

- EMN products were widely used by the Commission and Member States and were considered timely and policy relevant.
- EMN contributed to a shared understanding of migration trends, including during periods of rapid policy change.
- EMN outputs supported operational and policy decision-making and addressed

²⁷ See Annex IV, Figure 4.

²⁸ See Annex IV, Figure 5.

information needs not met through other EU instruments.

The evaluation examined how effectively the EMN delivered its planned outcomes and provided intended support.

Question 1: To what extent have the EMN activities contributed to achieving the specific and general objectives laid down in Council Decision 2008/381/EC and the actions carried out by the EMN?

The Network's activities²⁹ which correspond to the tasks set out in Article 2 of the Council Decision are:

- collect and share data and information from a wide array of sources;
- analyse information and make it available in a readily accessible format;
- contribute to developing migratory indicators and criteria;
- produce and publish periodic reports;
- cooperate with other relevant EU and international bodies.

Information produced by the EMN was widely considered to be accessible, comparable, easily readable, objective, reliable and up-to-date. Updated information was made available mainly through the regular publication of the annual reports on migration and asylum (ARMs) and their statistical annexes, as well as through quarterly bulletins. Objectivity and reliability were ensured through a multi-stakeholder and multi-agency approach to the data collection process, which entailed the direct involvement of the National Migration Networks. The comparability of migration-related data produced by the EMN steadily increased as a result of the support provided by the EMN Statistics WG and the introduction of structured data collection tools, such as the guidelines for producing AHQs, studies and ARMs developed in 2018. Addressing the readability and accessibility of the information produced by the EMN, the previous EMN evaluation of 2015 indicated the need for the EMN to provide more concise deliverables, including clear facts and figures on migration. The EMN responded to that recommendation by introducing flashes in 2018, which provide succinct information in a user-friendly format.

²⁹ A complete list of activities undertaken by the EMN can be found in annual EMN Status Reports: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/european-migration-network-emn/emn-publications/emn-status-reports_en.

Table 3 Planned vs actual products (2018-2021)

Output	Planned per year	2018	2019	2020	2021
AHQs	n.a ³⁰ .	67	90	74	98
ARMs	1	1	1	1	1
Bulletins	4	4	4	4	4
Flashes	n.a ³¹ .	4	7	6	7
Informs	up to 15	11	12	16	21
Studies	4 ³²	4	4	4	2

Source: Independent external evaluation of the European Migration Network 2018-2021. Final report.

Table 4 Topics covered per product

Topic	AHQs	ARMs	Bulletins	Studies	Informs
Legal migration and mobility	49	4	16	4	11
International protection and asylum	41	4	16	2	7
Unaccompanied minors and vulnerable groups	12	4	16	-	4
Integration and inclusion	11	4	16	1	1
Citizenship and statelessness	17	4	16	1	2
Borders, visa and Schengen	13	4	16	2	6
Irregular migration including migrant smuggling	10	4	16	1	2
Trafficking in human beings	5	4	16	1	1
Return and readmission	17	4	16	1	11
Residence	30	4	-	1	4
COVID-19 pandemic	5	-	-	-	6

Source: Independent external evaluation of the European Migration Network 2018-2021. Final report.

In addition to its high quality, the information produced by the EMN was considered to be policy relevant as it met the needs of its various stakeholders both at the EU and national level. Moreover, evidence confirmed that many of the stakeholders made effective use of EMN products, e.g. the EMN mapping of national legislative frameworks and developments was used to feed into the assessment of the implementation of the Long-Term Residence Directive. The information made available by the EMN also served to simplify and streamline the data collection conducted by other relevant EU bodies. At the national level, the EMN was an important contributor to national policy-making.

The evaluation found that the EMN's responsiveness to the information needs of its stakeholders was ensured also thanks to specific procedures set out in the EMN legal basis.

³⁰ AHQs are launched on a need basis.

³¹ The number depends on the number of EMN products delivered in the given year.

³² In accordance with the Annex to the WPs 2017-2018 and 2019-2020, the EMN shall initiate four studies per year. This information was not available for 2021.

Specifically, Article 6(4) of the Council Decision provides that the work programmes are adopted by the Commission after consultation of the NCPs and approval by the SB. Moreover, topics to be covered by the EMN products were selected based on a collaborative approach outlined in the work programmes.

A significant improvement in safe access to the information produced by the EMN came with the transfer of the IES to a new platform which helped ameliorate its performance. A major overhaul of the IES, including a new software, layout and IES version aimed at addressing the remaining issues and at improving the efficiency and user-friendliness, was planned for 2024, beyond the period of this evaluation.

Since the 2015 EMN evaluation, an increasing level of participation by EU-level stakeholders in the SB and NCP meetings has been noted. At the Member-State level, the EMN has consistently stepped up cooperation among the Member States as a platform for knowledge exchange in the field of migration and asylum. The EMN enhanced networking among practitioners across the EU and made possible the participation of national policy experts in conferences organised by other NCPs. Enhanced operational cooperation and knowledge sharing among the Member States were facilitated by the work carried out by the EMN WGs. The EMN also promoted collaboration between single NCPs and external actors.

The EMN engaged with international organisations and EU agencies for the preparation of products and events: four Informs on the impact of COVID-19 were developed in cooperation with the OECD in 2020 and one in 2021, in collaboration with EUAA and Frontex³³. Moreover, in 2021 a EMN conference was jointly organised by the NCP Finland in collaboration with the OECD and the CoE.

The EMN contributed to fostering the sharing of good practice by playing the role of facilitator in enabling access to the good practice identified in other Member States and exchanging information on migration practices adopted by the Member States.

An important development in external relations was the EMN's engagement with third countries over the evaluation period. In 2021, Georgia and Moldova joined the EMN as observers³⁴ while Armenia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Ukraine expressed an interest in joining the EMN³⁵. The Commission, assisted by the Cooperation with Third Countries WG (CTC WG), launched preliminary exchanges with these countries³⁶.

³³ European Commission (2020), EMN Status Report 2020. Available at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2021-11/00_eu_emn_status_report_2020_en.pdf.

³⁴ Status Report 2021. Available at: <https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-01/EMN%20status%20report%202021%20final.pdf>.

³⁵ Status Report 2021. Available at: <https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-01/EMN%20status%20report%202021%20final.pdf>.

³⁶ 27th SB meeting.

Question 2: What steps have been taken to increase the visibility of the EMN and its activities and have they been effective?

The EMN implemented various activities aimed at increasing its visibility:

- Internet-based Information Exchange System (EMN IES)
- EMN central and national websites
- EMN products (ARMs, studies, country factsheets, informs, AHQs, status reports, flashes, information leaflets)
- EMN Twitter and LinkedIn accounts
- EMN events (conferences, EMN Day, webinars, round tables, workshops).

All the above EMN information-sharing activities contributed to increasing the Network's visibility within the EU and across relevant third countries. The EMN conferences and events were particularly useful tools for the Network's deliverables and benefited from the participation of experts from Member States. The EMN Communication and Dissemination WG played an important role in implementing dissemination tasks.

A need for further strengthening of the role that NCPs played in mobilising national partners to promote EMN activities, including better coordination with policymakers, was identified in the course of this evaluation.

The 2021-2025 EMN communication strategy addressed most identified issues. The strategy also reflected the EMN's increased focus on communication and information sharing targeted at the wider public in order to ensure circulation of confirmed, accurate and reliable information and to counter the spread of fake news. To this end, the presentation of documents was streamlined, including new formats such as flashes and communication packages (press releases, news items on the website and social media posts) accompanying key EMN outputs. The strategy also prompted the NCPs to increase their presence on social media.

The impact of the 2021-2025 EMN communication strategy could only have been observed after the cut-off date of this evaluation and could not therefore be analysed. The evaluation confirmed, however, that increasing efforts to enhance the provision of information to the general public, including the production of material that could be adapted to specific national needs, were felt already in 2021.

4.1.2 Efficiency

Key findings:

- EMN activities were delivered with a proportionate use of resources, and stakeholders perceived the EMN as financially efficient.
- Incomplete ex-post financial data limited the precision of the cost analysis; available data indicate balanced use of funds across staff, events, and analytical work.
- The Work Programme-based financial reporting structure constrained year-specific analysis but did not impede the assessment of overall efficiency.

The overall evaluation of the programme's efficiency is composed of the following two analyses:

- To what extent was the scale of the EMN funding proportionate to the range of activities performed;
- The adequacy of EMN governance for the implementation of the activities of the Network.

Question 3 To what extent have the resources allocated to the EMN through the AMIF been sufficient for meeting the objectives of Council Decision 2008/381/EC and the actions carried out by the EMN?

The EMN was co-financed through AMIF resources which were distributed through different funding mechanisms depending on the specific activity to be supported, as shown in Table 4.

Table 5: Breakdown of the EMN-related funding

Type of funding	Activity
Grants	Activities carried out by the NCPs
Procurement	Activities of the Service Provider Communication Evaluation studies
Other actions	Activities carried out by the JRC IT Services
Indirect management	Activities by international organisations

The largest share allocated to grants out of the total EMN budget³⁷ corresponded to a remarkable higher number of EMN activities carried out by the NCPs as compared to the other EMN components.

Overall, the evaluation confirmed that the EMN was considered financially sustainable. As for the 2015 evaluation, AMIF resources were sufficient to cover the incurred costs between 2018 and 2021.

Question 4: Is the EMN sufficiently equipped to support its stakeholders in an appropriate manner?

The structure of the EMN is outlined in the Council Decision, which provides for clear roles and responsibilities of the different Network's components.

The various components of the Network are all interlinked through both top-down and bottom-up mechanisms which together provide a central structure (the EMN) that is systematically fed by peripheral inputs (National Migration Networks).

The top-down dimension involves:

- the Steering Board, which plays executive and monitoring roles, and provides the Network with strategic guidance.
- the Commission, which concertes the NCPs' activities (coordination role) and ensures correspondence between the objectives and actions of the EMN and the EU political priorities (political role).
- the Service Provider, which assists the Commission and provides secretarial support to ensuring proper functioning of the Network in the execution of its day-by-day activities.
- the NCPs, which play the two-fold role of contributing to the design of the work programmes (policy-design role) and implementing them (operational role).

The NCPs act as the interconnection node with the bottom-up dimension, which involves their respective National Migration Networks in charge of feeding the EMN products and activities with data, information and knowledge gathered at the national level.

The Council Decision envisages a further layer to the EMN governance, by providing for horizontal mechanisms aimed at ensuring regular communication and information exchange among the Network's members. The Steering Board meets at least twice a year, allowing for exchanges among its national members. Moreover, the EMN meets at least five times a year, thus allowing for regular exchanges among NCPs. The Commission acts as chair of both Steering Board and NCP meetings, which are all attended also by the Service Provider. While

³⁷ As indicated in Table 2.

that mechanism was found to work well, it could be further improved by involving of JRC in the EMN meetings (both SB and NCP) due to its extensive work in migration policy.

In terms of governance, the evaluation confirmed that the various components of the EMN worked in accordance with the EMN legal basis throughout the analysed period.

The analysis of the minutes of the SB meetings over the evaluation period showed that all SB meetings were attended by at least one representative per Member State and one representative of the Commission. During its meetings, the SB performed its tasks in compliance with the Council Decision and provided substantial strategic and political guidance to the Network, a major improvement on the situation described in the 2015 evaluation, which at that time identified limited strategic support from the SB to the NCPs. However, scientific experts were not involved, marking no progress since the 2015 evaluation when scientific experts had likewise not yet been appointed.

As regards NCPs, their composition was in line with the Council Decision and the analysis of the minutes of the NCP meetings confirmed that they performed their tasks in accordance with the legal basis.

A possible improvement in supporting key stakeholders would also be a systematic exchange of good national practice among NCPs in various migration policy areas, for example through a dedicated Section in EMN products.

Finally, it was also found that it would be useful for the EMN at the national level to have a strategy in place on how to establish and manage the National Migration Networks.

Overall, the evaluation confirmed the appropriateness of the EMN internal structure which allowed efficient management of the Network's activities, and a good level of awareness of internal distribution of roles and responsibilities.

Question 5: How efficient is the EMN Service Provider?

The EMN Service Provider in its contribution to the smooth operation of the EMN was found to be efficient, responsive and supportive. However, due to its higher workload, linked to an accumulation of various tasks, the Service Provider's delivery was sometimes delayed, e.g. drafting and circulating EMN NCP meeting minutes.

4.1.3 Coherence

Key findings:

- EMN activities were coherent with EU migration and asylum policy developments and complemented the work of relevant EU agencies.
- EMN outputs aligned with national priorities and contributed to consistency across Member States.
- No significant overlaps with other EU-level information or coordination tools were identified.

The evaluation analysed whether the EMN activities were coherent with the key policy initiatives as well as how consistent the objectives and the activities of the EMN were with those of the relevant EU agencies. International frameworks assessed have been limited by the EMN's mandate, as to migration-related activities within EU Member States and EMN observer countries.

Question 6: To what extent have the objectives and activities determined by Council Decision 2008/381/EC and the actions carried out by the EMN been consistent with relevant EU policy migration developments, notably those set out in the New Pact on Migration and Asylum such as the Migration Preparedness and Crisis Blueprint?

Overall coherence between the EMN objectives and those of the Pact of Migration and Asylum, the EU Blue Card Directive and the EU action plan against migrant smuggling was confirmed in the evaluation.

The EMN deliverables to support policy-making and to inform the general public were consistent with the Pact's objective to ensure fair and efficient asylum, return and integration policies, as well as better management of EU external borders. The EMN's contribution to facilitating practical cooperation and the exchange of good practice represented an important tool for a more coordinated application of the existing EU *acquis*. It served to promote efforts to harmonise implementation of the common standards governing asylum procedures, reception conditions and the recognition of TCNs applying for international protection. The common understanding of migration-related issues, as promoted by the EMN, supported the introduction of a new solidarity mechanism in addressing a situation of migratory pressure. The collection and exchange of reliable and up-to-date information also supported the development of better crisis preparedness and responses, as well as the development of new legal pathways in the field of migration and asylum. The EMN 2021-2022 work programme focused on the use of new technologies and the establishment of new legal pathways (e.g. to meet labour market needs and support vulnerable groups such as children in migration). The EMN facilitation of good practice, practical cooperation, and knowledge-building on migration and asylum showed synergies with the EU Migration Preparedness and Crisis Management Mechanism Network (Blueprint).

The EMN collected and provided information relevant to the EU Blue Card Directive. ARMs and country factsheets reported annually – and Bulletins on a quarterly basis – the national measures implemented by the Member States to regulate entry and residence of TCNs. This was fully consistent with the Directive, which aims to regulate highly qualified TCNs intending to work and reside in a Member State. Moreover, the EMN’s support to the development of enhanced migration indicators, also in collaboration with relevant EU bodies, proved to be consistent with the Directive.

The EMN objectives and activities were found to be consistent with those of the EU action plan against migrant smuggling. Both initiatives envisaged the collection of information on migrant smuggling, assistance to vulnerable migrants as well as stronger cooperation with third countries to counter irregular migration. In this regard, between 2018 and 2021, the EMN ARMs and country factsheets included an overview of the latest national policy developments on the fight against migrant smuggling and irregular stays. The EMN and the EU action plan supported cooperation with third countries and relevant EU agencies and the production of objective, up-to-date, reliable, relevant, and comparable information.

At the national level, Member States adopted policy developments in all policy areas covered by the EMN between 2018 and 2021³⁸. They were overall consistent with the key priorities outlined in subsequent EMN work programmes as well as with the main topics covered by EMN outputs. The only three exceptions were: age assessment and procedures, national referral mechanisms, and diaspora in cooperation activities. These policy areas were not addressed by any work programme or outputs produced by the Network between 2018 and 2021. However, all Member States took actions related to such policy areas, pointing to policy priorities that go beyond the scope of action of the Network.

Question 7: To what extent have the objectives and activities determined by Council Decision 2008/381/EC and the actions carried out by the EMN been consistent with other objectives and activities of Member States and EU agencies, including notably EUAA, Frontex and FRA?

The EMN objectives and scope of activities reflected the EU priorities in the field of migration and analysis, as outlined in the key policy areas covered by the EMN products and activities. All these areas corresponded to political priorities across the Member States, as demonstrated by related policy developments occurred between 2018 and 2021.

The EMN remained active in all the policy areas and responded to the information needs of Member States.

³⁸ Legal migration, international protection, unaccompanied minors and other vulnerable groups, integration and inclusion, citizenship and statelessness, borders, visas and Schengen, irregular migration including migrant smuggling, trafficking in adult human beings, return and readmission, and migration and development cooperation.

A high degree of coherence and consistency with the objectives and activities of the EMN, EUAA, FRA and Frontex was confirmed in the evaluation.

The evaluation identified a number of mechanisms in place to avoid overlap or duplication of efforts:

- the legal basis of both the EMN and the Agencies includes specific provisions aimed at avoiding overlaps, while at the same time reinforcing mutual synergies;
- representatives from the Agencies were regularly invited to EMN meetings to foster collaboration and avoid duplication of activities;
- EUAA and Frontex users were granted access to the EMN Information Exchange System;
- the EMN also took specific actions to contain the risk of duplications, given that EUAA also produced AHQs and studies.

Moreover, the EMN 2017-2018 work programme emphasised the need to avoid duplication between ARMs and EUAA's Annual Asylum Reports³⁹. The evaluation confirmed that there was no duplication of activities conducted by the EMN and the EUAA. Similarly, FRA's products over time dealt with migration-related issues such as borders, Schengen and visas, integration, international protection, and asylum, return and readmissions, and unaccompanied minors and vulnerable groups, though their focus remain always on individuals' rights. FRA addressed only a few of the indicators covered by the ARMs Finally, the analysis and reports developed by Frontex covered a subset of indicators related to the irregular migration policy area, while bypassing many within other policy areas covered instead by the ARMs

³⁹ EMN 2017-18 work programme. Available at: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/funding/asylum-migration-and-integration-funds/european-migration-network-emn_en

4.2 How did the EU intervention make a difference and to whom?

4.2.1 EU added value

Key findings:

- The EMN delivered added value by providing structured, comparable information that could not be generated as effectively by Member States acting alone.
- The EMN facilitated regular exchange, peer learning, and shared analyses that supported coordinated EU approaches.
- The thematic coverage and methodological consistency of EMN outputs strengthened cross-country comparability and policy dialogue.

The evaluation analysed key aspects of the EU added value of the EMN: its unique position and mandate as well as the legal basis and EU funding.

Question 8: What is the European added value of Council Decision 2008/381/EC and the actions carried out by the EMN? Could the main findings (results/outputs) presented in the evaluation have been achieved without EU intervention?

The evaluation confirmed that many EMN achievements could not have been produced without the support of the Network, particularly the exchange of good practice and strengthening practical cooperation among the Member States, as well as addressing the information needs of national policymakers.

The EMN brought added value, including direct support for enhanced cooperation both within the EU and beyond. The permanent nature of the EMN and its unique position created an environment in which relationships were built and mutual trust among actors in the field of migration and asylum could develop, both among and within the Member States. Developing stable relationships with national actors was key to getting access to hard data and ensuring the production of up-to-date and comprehensive information.

The EU intervention proved indispensable in making the provision of information a stable and widely recognised mechanism.

Question 9: What is the additional value resulting from EMN products and activities compared to what could be achieved by Member States at national and/or local levels?

It was confirmed in the evaluation that no other network nor organisation at the EU level, or at a local level, was capable of offering the same structured procedures and quality standards for information collection and sharing, as well as of ensuring communication and exchanges

of data among all the Member States. The unique value of the EMN that was identified was a ‘one-stop-shop’ function for migration-related information at the EU level not available elsewhere.

It was also confirmed that the information produced by the EMN remained a unique source in terms of quality, comprehensiveness and relevance when compared to other sources available at the national level, thanks also to support from EMN WGs focused on specific EMN products.

The information contained in the EMN products was a source of inspiration for policy debates at the EU level. Due to their broad spectrum of thematic and geographical coverage, several EMN studies supported the introduction and/or revision of EU policy and legislative initiatives. One example is the proposal for a Directive on common standards and procedures in Member States for returning illegally staying third-country nationals⁴⁰, which was informed by the 2018 EMN study on the effectiveness of return in EU Member States.

However, identifying information needs that were relevant to all Member States and producing comparable information based on data provided by all of them entailed multiple rounds of consultations and negotiations which required a substantial amount of time.

Question 10: To what extent are the outcomes of Council Decision 2008/381/EC and the actions carried out by the EMN sustainable? Are the effects likely to last after the intervention ends?

The evaluation revealed that if the EMN were to be discontinued, it would be difficult to ensure a stable delivery of its activities and deliverables at a comparable level. In particular, key activities whose continued existence would be at risk were believed to be: the National Migration Networks, the exchange of information with third countries, and the production of national reports on migration and asylum in all the Member States. The regular collection of national migration data and the exchange of information across the Member States were seen as potentially being less impacted if the EMN were discontinued. The two functions, if continued in a different EU mechanism, would be unlikely to ensure production of EU-level data at the same comprehensive and granular level as was the case with the EMN over the evaluation period.

⁴⁰ COM/2018/634 final.

Question 11: Is the Council Decision 2008/381/EC still an adequate basis of the actions of the EMN?

It was reconfirmed during the evaluation that Council Decision 2008/381/EC provided a sufficient mandate towards achieving the EMN objectives, ensuring the provision of reliable, comparable, and up-to-date information on migration and asylum in a neutral manner.

It provides for a ‘matrix’ approach to data collection which makes the information produced by the EMN one of a kind. The EMN structure envisaged by the Council Decision indeed provides for a two-fold dimension.

- Horizontal dimension – According to Article 5 of the Council Decision, each Member State should designate an NCP composed of at least three experts, one of which acting as coordinator. In turn, each NCP should establish a National Migration Network comprising a wide range of organisations and individuals active in the field of migration and asylum. This networking structure allows professionals and practitioners from a variety of organisations to come together to identify, collect and analyse data and information that is often scattered across multiple national stakeholders dealing with migration and asylum at the national level. At the same time, the ‘horizontal capillarity’ of the EMN facilitates the sharing of its products and results beyond the Network’s stakeholders.
- Vertical dimension – NCPs are part of an integrated structure coordinated by the Commission supported by an external Service Provider. Moreover, according to Article 4 of the Council Decision, each Member State designates a national representative as member of the EMN Steering Board, which also includes a representative of the Commission acting as chair. The vertical dimension facilitates the integration, comparability and exchange of information collected across the Member States, thus contributing towards practical cooperation and mutual understanding in the field of migration and asylum.

This two-fold structure is a key feature of the EMN as it helps the EU cope with the multidimensional migration phenomenon.

The format of the EMN as an EU-level network was found to be tailored well to meeting the needs of stakeholders in the migration and asylum field for the production and exchange of knowledge, including statistics, as well as of enhanced cooperation among Member States.

Question 12: Could the results, delivered through the implementation of the Council Decision 2008/381/EC and the actions carried out by the EMN have been achieved with less European funding? Could the use of other policy instruments or mechanisms, at European and/or national level, have provided better cost-effectiveness?

The EMN funding from AMIF proved to be pivotal in ensuring the achievement and sustainability of the results and benefits achieved by the Network. No other alternative in the

form of existing policy instruments or mechanisms would be capable of providing a comparable amount of information at the quality required by Member States.

4.3 Is the intervention still relevant?

The relevance of the EMN has been analysed in the evaluation both against the challenges facing the EU and stakeholders' evolving needs.

Question 13: To what extent have Council Decision 2008/381/EC and the actions carried out by the EMN been relevant in view of the EU's needs/challenges and are they still relevant in view of current needs and challenges?

While the EMN's main objective remained unchanged during the evaluation period, the specific objectives listed in the work programmes evolved, with an increasing focus on new technologies and enhanced cooperation with third countries.

This evolving focus reflected the emerging challenges and policy developments that shaped the EU migration and asylum landscape over the years. The newly identified needs were related to two key factors affecting the EU migration and asylum system between 2018 and 2021, i.e. the COVID-19 pandemic and the sudden increase in the number of both asylum applications and irregular border crossings.

The relevance of the Network to key EU priorities was further confirmed by the high level of alignment between the scope of the EMN written deliverables, conferences and events on the one hand and the challenges and priorities in the field of migration and asylum in the EU on the other.

Table 6 – Coverage of EU priorities in the EMN outputs

EU priority	AHQs	Informs	Studies	Conferences	Other events
COVID-19	5	7	0	1	5
Border management	95	15	7	0	0
Labour market	37	1	3	0	1
Vulnerable groups	18	7	2	0	0
Innovation in migration	10	4	1	3	0
Migration management	33	0	4	5	3

Source: Independent external evaluation of the European Migration Network 2018-2021. Final report.

Question 14: To what extent have Council Decision 2008/381/EC and the actions carried out by the EMN been relevant in view of specific needs of stakeholders, in particular Member States and civil society?

Alignment between the focus of the EMN activities and products and the priority topics proposed by NCPs was ensured throughout the evaluation period. The EMN mechanisms guaranteed that the Network's activities and outputs were relevant to its stakeholders. The proposed topics of deliverables were always approved by the SB in a vote, which guaranteed alignment with the information needs and national priorities of a majority of the Member States. It was also confirmed in the evaluation that the EMN products met the information needs of the NCPs, of policymakers at the national level in the field of migration and asylum, as well as of the National Migration Networks.

Some room for improvement was identified within the time-consuming EMN publication procedures. The evaluation confirmed that the topic selection process required a series of negotiation rounds, reducing the EMN's timeliness which, in turn, affected its overall effectiveness and relevance. On the other hand, in terms of the overall integrity of the process, the proposal and ranking of study topics were handled in a well-structured manner, beginning with the proposal of study topics, merging or reformulating of proposals, ranking through a vote, and final submission to the SB.

Another area where relevance could be further improved is EU-wide comparability of migration statistics collected at the national level. Specific guidelines on national migration statistics would be useful to address the deficiency.

Although the Network was found fit for purpose as regards the needs of national policymakers, only partial alignment with the needs of the general public was confirmed, similarly to the findings of the 2015 evaluation. In order to address that shortcoming, the EMN 2021-2025 communication strategy provided for mainstreamed and improved presentation of EMN products, including the production of flashes, reader-friendly outputs with a more engaging presentation to be more appealing and accessible to the general public⁴¹. Adjusting EMN products to meet the needs of the general public was also facilitated by enhancing and expanding EMN partnerships and networking to embrace both broader engagement by knowledge centres with various individuals and practitioners beyond policymakers.

⁴¹ EMN communication strategy (2021-2025).

5. WHAT ARE THE CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED?

5.1 Conclusions

Between 2018 and 2021, the EMN's performance was found to be in line with its mandate and its objectives. Compared to the 2015 evaluation, the EMN improved its capacity to support EU policy-making in the field of migration and asylum. Two main mechanisms made it possible for the EMN to support the Network. First, the EMN provided up-to-date, objective, reliable, comparable, easily readable, and accessible information, which was widely used to identify and respond to EU policy priorities, to design and implement new policy initiatives and to inform national policy and decision-making. Second, the EMN contributed to mutual understanding and trust building among its various stakeholders.

EMN's increasing **effectiveness** was also confirmed in focusing on activities enhancing its visibility (EMN's online platform, central and national websites, the various EMN products, social media accounts and EMN events). Further strengthening of that role was found necessary at the Member State level in order to better mobilise national partners to promote EMN activities.

Analysing **efficiency** of the EMN in the evaluation posed a methodological challenge due to the missing financial data. Despite the limitations regarding availability of financial data and basing the analysis on budgetary allocations (and not on actually incurred costs, as these continue not to be available for the EMN as a whole due to delayed reporting by some Member States), the evaluation confirmed that the funding from AMIF was largely sufficient to cover the operation of the EMN and proportionate to the plethora of activities carried out by the EMN. It was also found that the architecture of the EMN governance was adequate for the purpose of implementing the various activities according to the Work Programmes in the period under evaluation. Also, the EMN Service Provider played an important part in ensuring smooth operation of the Network.

At the EU level, a high level of **coherence** between EMN activities and key EU priorities in the field of migration and asylum was confirmed in the evaluation. The objectives of the EMN were found to be aligned with the selected relevant initiatives taken in the EU during the evaluation period, namely the Pact on Migration and Asylum, the revised EU Blue Card Directive, the EU action plan against migrant smuggling. The EMN's comprehensive approach to the migration phenomenon was also found to be consistently in line with the specific scope of action of each of these initiatives. These initiatives were highlighted due to their direct relevance to the EMN's analytical and information exchange activities, while recognising that this not exhaustive for migration policy developments during the evaluation period. Their inclusion reflects the specific policy areas in which Member States most frequently sought comparative information and analytical support. The uniqueness of EMN products lies in the broad spectrum of topics covered in its deliverables as well as in the capacity to collect data and information directly by the Member States which translated into higher reliability and comparability. Finally, enhanced cooperation between the EMN and the

representatives at the EU level served to ensure that the common purposes did not cause any duplication of efforts.

At the national level, a high level of consistency between topics covered by EMN outputs and Member States' policy developments between 2018 and 2021 was also identified. This was primarily the result of the EMN consultative selection process of topics to be prioritised in its products, which required several rounds of consultations between the Commission and the Member States both in the SB and the NCPs which helped to respond to the needs of various stakeholders at the national level. The consultative process, a distinctive feature of the Network, had, however, its relative weakness: the reiterated rounds of consultation were time-consuming. Yet, the perceived cost of consultation rounds was found to be outweighed by the benefits of the process and the consensus reached.

The evaluation also found that the responsiveness of the EMN to the needs of the general public remained an area requiring further improvement. The information produced by the EMN was at times of a technical nature and therefore not adequately tailored to the needs of the general public. Room for improvement was also identified in how EMN results are shared. Despite achieving increased visibility for the EMN at the EU level, information-sharing activities at the national level, including communication with the media, proved to be somewhat limited both in numbers and outreach, and communication of EMN activities remained mainly limited to the circle of policymakers. In order to address this, in 2021 the EMN took several actions aimed at enhancing the communication and publication of its activities and results among the wider public. The effects of these efforts will be analysed during the next evaluation of the EMN.

The evaluation confirmed that the EMN brought remarkable **EU added value**. Fostering the exchange and provision of high-quality and comparative information and good practice in the field of migration and asylum as well as enhancing practical cooperation in migration policy between the Member States, the EU and international organisations, and among national actors could not have been achieved at a comparable level without the activities of the Network. In addition, EMN products contributed to a common understanding of key migration-related features among policymakers in EU Member States.

If the EMN had been discontinued, it would have been difficult to ensure the continuation of its activities, especially the existence of National Migration Networks, the exchange of information with third countries, and the production of national reports on migration and asylum in all the Member States. In this context, the legal base of the EMN was found to be adequate, as it provided sufficient mandate which were matched by commensurate resources to attain the EMN's objectives.

5.2 Lessons learned

The evaluation of the activities of the EMN in the period 2018-2021 identified five areas as lessons learned, where more focus and monitoring would be useful to further enhance the operation of the EMN in the future:

- maintaining full consistency between the evolving EU policy priorities and the EMN activities defined in the work programmes;
- ensuring that the Joint Research Centre is regularly involved in the SB and NCP meetings;
- including a section on national good practices in the EMN products;
- developing guidelines on the production of national migration statistics in collaboration with Eurostat;
- drafting a strategy on how to establish and manage the National Migration Networks.

ANNEX I PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

1. Lead DG and Decide reference

The evaluation was managed by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Migration and Security, DG HOME Unit C5: Migration Management Preparedness.

2. Derogations granted

A derogation was granted from the obligation to carry out a public consultation. The derogation was justified by the fact that the evidence underpinning the analysis could only be collected from the EMN stakeholders. The general public, not being EMN technical stakeholders, could not provide any relevant input.

3. Organisation and timing

The evaluation was supported by a service contract, which was signed on 4 May 2023 and the final report was delivered on 8 May 2024. An Interservice Steering Group (ISG) was set up comprising the following EC services: Secretariat-General, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, DG International Partnerships, DG Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, Joint Research Centre, DG Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection. 3 meetings of the ISG were held.

4. Evidence and sources

Evidence was gathered from several types of sources: a Call for evidence was published on 16 January 2023 and was closed on 16 March 2023; an online survey targeted at 29 NCPs and 555 National Migration Network members, 3 strategic interviews, 33 targeted and 10 flash interviews, 6 case studies and a workshop with 24 NCP coordinators, as well as desk research. The main body of evidence consisted of the replies to the survey.

5. External expertise

The evaluation supporting study was carried out by a consortium composed of Ernst and Young Consulting and RAND.

ANNEX II METHODOLOGY AND ANALYTICAL MODELS USED

In order to gather all the data and other evidence needed to meet the objectives of the evaluation, the data collection strategy of the external study used combined both desk research and fieldwork activities. Desk resources provided mainly relevant data and factual evidence on the functioning of the EMN including its structure, governance, activities (i.e. networking, dissemination and communication) and actual products. Field research activities allowed the team to gather in-depth qualitative insights on how and why specific results have been achieved and collect inputs on possible lessons learned for the future.

Overall, data and information collected during the evaluation proved to be robust. Reliability and validity of results was ensured through systematic triangulation of data and information collected through both desk and field sources.

In general, the main limitation encountered pertained to the timing differences between the period in which the study has been conducted (2023-2024) and the scope of the evaluation (2018-2021). This affected the consultation process. Only few of the current NCP members and/or SB members were involved in EMN activities between 2018 and 2021. Thus, they were not able to provide relevant feedback and information for the period under evaluation. To mitigate this limitation, guidelines for targeted interviews with SB members were shared in advance to allow interviewees that were not in place between 2018 and 2021 to be adequately briefed by former colleagues on the EMN activities performed during that period. Moreover, in some cases, the current SB members attended the interview together with their predecessors.

Moreover, the study identified some issues affecting the functioning of the Network between 2018 and 2021 for which actions have been already taken by the EMN at the end of the evaluation period. Though the assessment of the effects stemming from such actions fall out of the scope of this evaluation, consulted stakeholders pointed out that some of the issues identified by this evaluation have been addressed or at least mitigated by the new actions, thus they might not be relevant today. This is a point to be considered as part of the next EMN evaluation.

Lastly, the lack of available data related to the type of costs entailed by NCPs to implement EMN activities prevented to have a full quantification of the costs of EMN activities. In this regard, cost quantification was limited to the type of costs (i.e. staff, travel, drafting of Ad hoc queries) for which financial data were available.

Desk Research

The EMN is a complex network, including multiple and evolving priorities, a vast range of actors, and a lot of outputs. Therefore, also based on the experience gained through the 2015 evaluation of the EMN, and as highlighted by the ToR (p. 6), the desk research constituted a primary data collection activity in the context of this study.

Table 1 – Approach used for conducting in-depth desk research

Type of document	Analytical approach
EMN Work Programmes	
Work programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 Work programmes (2017-18, 2019-20, 2021-22) were analysed to investigate EMN objectives and priorities, as well as actions set out over the years.
EMN Products	
Ad Hoc Queries (AHQs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 303 AHQs were analysed in terms of no. of AHQs launched/addressed per year, country, topic.
Annual Reports on Migration and Asylum (ARMs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The synthesis of 4 ARMs (2018, 2019, 2020, 2021) were analysed to investigate EU and national policy developments as well as challenges and needs in the field of migration and asylum.
Bulletins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 27 bulletins¹ were analysed in terms of number of bulletins issued per year and topic.
Country Factsheets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 country factsheets (2021) from the Member States selected countries for the case studies were analysed and reported in Annex IV to outline key national strategies and policy developments in the field of migration and asylum.
Flashes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18 flashes² were analysed in terms of number of flashes issued per year and topic.
Informs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 28 informs were analysed in terms of number of informs issued per year and topic.
Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13 studies were analysed.³
Status Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 status reports (2018, 2019, 2020, 2021) were analysed.
EMN back-office documents	
Financial statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EMN budget foreseen from 2018 to 2021 was analysed in terms of (i) resources allocated to each NCP and (ii) resources allocated/spent by each NCP to different types of activities – e.g. outreaching activities,

	<p>conferences and other events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant agreements for Member States selected for the case studies (2017-2022). • Periodic summary of financial statements for Member States selected for the case studies (2017-2022). • Project assessment reports for Member States selected for the case studies (2017-2022).
Minutes of key EMN meetings and events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes of 8 selected EMN Steering Board meetings and NCP meetings respectively were analysed in terms of topics covered, discussions held, actions undertaken, number and type of participants.
Attendance reports for EMN Working Group meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of participants in the EMN Working Groups meetings (2018-2021) was analysed.
Documents related to EMN dissemination and communication activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 EMN Communication Strategies (2016-2020, 2021-2025) were analysed. • EMN Communication and Dissemination Roadmap (2019) was analysed. • EMN Communication Toolkit (2021) was analysed.
Internal rules of procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product templates and guidelines
<i>EU legislative and policy initiatives</i>	
EU legal, strategic, and operational documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Decision (2008/381/EC). • The Directive (EU) 2021/1883 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 October 2021. • Regulation (EU) 2021/2303 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 December 2021. • Council Regulation (EC) No 168/2007 of 15 February 2007 establishing a European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. • Regulation (EU) 2019/1896 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 November 2019. • The following documents were analysed to understand key recent EU policy developments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Commission Communication on action plan against migrant smuggling (2015-2020); ○ EU strategy on voluntary return and reintegration;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Commission Communication on return and readmission; ○ Commission Communication on New Pact on Migration and Asylum; ○ EU blueprint for preparedness and management of crises related to migration.
EU agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 3 EU agencies (i.e. EUAA, Frontex, FRA) were analysed in terms of legal basis in order to outline objectives and tasks.
<i>Others</i>	
Relevant databases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Eurostat statistical data on migration and asylum. ● KCMD Data+ Catalogue, Atlas of Migration, Dynamic Data Hub and EU Return Dashboard.
Websites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● EMN Website. ● National Websites of the Member States.

Field research

The operational and strategic levels of the Network reflect a clear distribution of tasks and roles played by the different EMN stakeholders. Acknowledging differences in terms of governance and structure of the Network allowed the proper design of the study's consultation strategy, i.e. ask the relevant questions and use the appropriate tool. For instance, the team undertook targeted interviews with national representatives in the EMN Steering Board. The advisory and strategic role played by this group makes the interview a preferable tool for capturing nuances and information that might not be disclosed through an online survey. The survey was instead targeted at members of the NCPs and the National Migration Networks in order to collect operational information that was then integrated into a comparative cross-cutting analysis of the EMN functioning and results. Besides EMN members, specific attention was paid to gathering practical information from different stakeholders, including EU institutions and bodies, relevant international organisations, representatives from academia and Civil Society Organisations. Table 2 provides a detailed overview of the stakeholder consultation strategy.

Table 2 – Stakeholder consultation strategy

Tool	Stakeholders targeted	Topics	Stakeholders consulted
Strategic interviews (4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EMN chair - Head of Sector, Forecasting, preparedness and policy monitoring Policy officer responsible for EMN budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any changes occurred since the last evaluation, as regards both the EMN working mechanisms and its context of reference The current state of play of migration and asylum in the EU, including known problems and main issues at stake New insights (e.g. contacts of relevant stakeholders) Level of engagement of the EMN target groups in the Network's activities Level of responsiveness of the Network stakeholders to the EMN inputs/requests State of relationships/partnerships with other EU agencies/bodies State of implementation of the objectives set in the WPs, along with factors that might have adversely/positively affected their achievement Categories of costs/benefits associated with participation in the Network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two additional interviews with DG HOME have been performed during the final phase of the evaluation.
Flash interviews (10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Contact Points (BE, CY, DE, FI, FR, IE, LT, LU, NL, SE) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overview of the NCP participation in and contribution to the EMN activities Main strengths and weaknesses of the EMN activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These interviews have been performed in the occasion of the 129th NCP meeting held in Brussels on 29 June 2023, with NCPs which volunteered to be interviewed.
Online survey (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Contact Points (27) National Migration Networks (67) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU added value of the EMN Problems/gaps affecting the functioning and effects of the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the online survey for NCP coordinators, in total, 27 survey responses from 25 Member States and 2 Observer States were received out of 29 NCPs

		<p>EMN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future recommendations 	<p>from 26 Member States and 3 Observer States consulted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the online survey for National Migration Network members, in total, 67 responses from 19 Member States were received out of 555 National Migration Network members from 26 Member States consulted.
<p>Targeted interviews (33)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of the EMN SB (23) • EU bodies (4): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ EUAA ○ FRA ○ Frontex ○ Joint Research Center (JRC) • International organisations (2): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CoE ○ OECD • Civil society organisations (3): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ European Network on Statelessness ○ Missing Children Europe ○ PICUM • Representatives from academia (1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with EU-level stakeholders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Developments in the EU migration and asylum landscape ○ Relevant EU initiatives and regulatory frameworks ○ Role of EU Agencies contributing to migration and asylum policies, and challenges faced in achieving higher coordination ○ Collaborations/partnerships developed with the Network ○ Burdens/benefits associated with engaging with the EMN ○ Recommendations to improving the EMN functioning and mandate ○ Good practices • Interviews with national stakeholders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Relevant national developments in the field of migration and asylum ○ Dissemination/outreach of the Network at the national and local levels ○ Progress made on enlarging the National Migration Networks ○ Categories of costs/benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As per target.

		<p>associated with participation in the Network</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Member States non-financial contribution to the Network activities ○ Collaboration/partnership developed with/through the Network ○ Factors that might have adversely/positively affected the objectives set in the WPs ○ Good practices implemented at the local/regional level ○ Interviews with international and civil society organisations: ○ Opinion on relevance, quality, availability and accessibility of EMN outputs, as well as any suggestions for improvement ○ Experience in using EMN tools ○ Involvement in EMN networking activities ○ Collaboration/partnership developed through the Network ○ Categories of costs/benefits associated with participation in the Network ○ Competing channels/networks/organisations preferred to the EMN ● Interviews with representatives from academia: ○ Overall quality of the EMN publications ○ Relevance of the topics covered by the EMN activities ○ Added value of the EMN 	
Direct observations (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Steering Board meeting (1) ● NCP meeting (1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Functioning of the EMN, including structure governance and working practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As per target.

<p>Case study consultations (11)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each case study entailed two types of consultations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1 group interview with NCP members of each of the selected Member States (6) ○ 1 focus group with members of the National Migration Network from each of the selected Member States (5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficiency of the EMN at the national level • Coherence of EMN objectives and activities with those enshrined in relevant national policies and strategies • Relevance of EMN objectives and activities in relation to current needs and challenges faced by national stakeholders • Added value of the EMN 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instead of 6 focus group interviews in total considering one consultation from each of the 6 selected Member States, only 5 were conducted due to unavailability of relevant stakeholders from one Member State.
<p>Workshop with NCP coordinators (1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One workshop with NCP coordinators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insights and experiences to inform the design of operational conclusions and factual recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As per target.

ANNEX III EVALUATION MATRIX AND, WHERE RELEVANT, DETAILS ON ANSWERS TO THE EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1.1 EFFECTIVENESS

Table 1 – Evaluation Matrix

Judgment criteria	Indicators and descriptors	Sources
EQ1 To what extent have the EMN activities contributed to achieving the specific and general objectives laid down in Council Decision 2008/381/EC and the actions carried out by the EMN?		
<i>EQ1.1 To what extent did EMN activities contribute to achieving the objectives set out in the Work Programmes and the Council Decision?</i>		
<p><u>General objectives:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The information and knowledge produced by the EMN support EU policymaking in the field of migration and asylum The EMN provides up-to-date, objective, reliable and comparable information to the general public <p><u>Specific objectives:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The information and knowledge produced by the EMN responds to the information needs of policymakers The information and knowledge produced by the EMN responds to the information needs of various target groups The information and knowledge produced by the EMN complements that of other EU and Member States initiatives The information and knowledge produced by the EMN contribute to enhancing the EU capacity to respond to migration and asylum crises The information and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of correspondence between the topics covered by EMN outputs and key information needs of EU and national stakeholders Extent to which EU and national policymakers perceive that EMN outputs increase their knowledge and understanding of migration and asylum issues Extent to which members of the National Migration Networks perceive that EMN outputs increase their knowledge and understanding of migration and asylum issues Extent to which EU and national policymakers perceive that EMN as supportive in preventing migration crises Number and type of national policy and legislative initiatives informed by the EMN Number and type of good practices exchanged among Member States on migration and asylum Number and type of EMN outputs targeted at the general public Number and type of cooperation mechanisms established through 	<p><u>Desk sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council Decision 2008/381 EMN Work Programmes EMN products EMN back-office documents <p><u>Field sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online survey targeted at: EMN NCPs National Migration Networks Strategic interviews with the Commission Targeted interviews with: EU bodies EMN SB national members International and civil society organisations Case studies

<p>knowledge produced by the EMN are useful in view of reforming the EU asylum and migration system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information and knowledge produced by the EMN allow to meet both EU short and longer-term strategic objectives in the field of migration and asylum • The EMN contributes to developing practical cooperation among Member States and between them and EU-level stakeholders in the field of on migration and asylum • The EMN contributes to finding new technologies (e.g. artificial intelligence) to support migration and asylum management • The EMN contributes to finding new legal pathways (e.g. talent partnerships) to support migration and asylum management • Migration and asylum strategies in the Member States have been developed or refined based on the work of the EMN • The EMN supports the design and implementation of new EU initiatives in the field of migration and asylum 	<p>the EMN support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and type of new technologies identified/developed by the EMN • Number and type of new legal pathways covered by EMN outputs • Number and type of national initiatives based on EMN products and activities • Level of convergence between national migration strategies and the EMN products 	
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EQ1.2 Is the EMN effectively carrying out the tasks set out in the Council Decision?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EMN collects and exchanges up-to-date and reliable data and information • Data and information exchanged by the EMN are collected from a wide range of sources • Data and information are exchanged by the EMN in a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type of data and information collected • Number and type of data sources used for EMN products • Number and type of NCP contributions to EMN products • Extent to which EMN data are perceived as up-to-date, objective, reliable and 	<p><u>Desk sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Decision 2008/381 • EMN products • EMN back-office documents • EU statistical databases relevant to migration and asylum
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<p>readily accessible format</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EMN produces and publishes periodic reports on migration and asylum situation in the EU and the Member States • The EMN contributes to the development of migratory indicators and statistics • The EMN contributes to improving comparability of EU statistics and information on migration and asylum 	<p>comparable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and type of new indicators and criteria produced • Types of indicators used and information exchanged at the EU level in the field of migration and asylum • Level of comparability of EU statistics and information on migration and asylum 	<p><u>Field sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic interviews with the Commission • Online surveys targeted at: • EMN NCPs • National Migration Networks • Targeted interviews with: • EU bodies • EMN Service Provider • EMN SB national members • Case studies
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EQ1.3 What factors influenced the EMN outcomes in a positive and negative way?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External factors influence/enable the EMN ability to achieve the objectives of the Council Decision • External factors influence/enable the EMN ability to implement the actions listed in the Work Programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of external factors influencing the ability of the Network to achieve its objectives • List of external factors influencing the ability of the Network implement its actions 	<p><u>Desk sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMN products • EMN back-office documents <p><u>Field sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic interviews with the Commission • Targeted interviews with: • EU bodies • EMN Service Provider • EMN SB national members • Direct observation of EMN's meetings • Case studies
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EQ2 What steps have been taken to increase the visibility of the EMN and its activities and have they been effective?

EQ2.1 To what extent were the EMN outputs disseminated within and outside the Network?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EMN products are regularly uploaded on and exchanged through the IES • The EMN products are regularly published on the EMN website • The EMN relies on innovative communication tools and initiatives to increase its outreach • The EMN products are available in different national languages • The EMN undertakes awareness-raising activities and disseminates the information it produces • The EMN regularly rganises networking events at the EU and national levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequency of the updates to the IES • Number and type of NCPs' contributions to the IES • Number and type of communication tools developed by the EMN • Number and type of EMN outputs translated in different languages • Number and type of awareness-raising activities undertaken • Number and type of dissemination activities undertaken • Number and type of networking activities organised by the EMN at the EU and national levels 	<p><u>Desk sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMN Work Programmes • EMN products • EMN back-office documents <p><u>Field sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online surveys targeted at: • EMN NCPs • National Migration Networks • Strategic interviews with the Commission • Targeted interviews with: • EMN Service Provider • EMN SB national members
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EQ2.2 To what extent have the EMN networking and dissemination activities contributed to increasing its visibility?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EMN is widely used as a platform for raising awareness and exchanging knowledge in the field of migration and asylum • EMN networking and dissemination activities directly contributed to spreading the Network's visibility both within the EU and across relevant third countries • The EMN has worked to establish relationships with other EU actors in the field of migration and asylum • The EMN coordinates information and cooperate with other relevant EU and international bodies • The EMN has created and maintains an online 	<p>Level of uptake of EMN products</p> <p>Number and type of EMN members invited to participate in activities/events in the field of migration and asylum</p> <p>Extent to which the consulted stakeholders reported to use EMN as knowledge building/sharing platform</p> <p>Number and type of EMN products available in different national languages</p> <p>Number and type of external participants in the EMN networking events</p> <p>Number and frequency of visitors of EMN website</p> <p>Level of perception of the EMN visibility by different stakeholder constituencies</p>	<p><u>Desk sources:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMN products • EMN back-office documents <p><u>Field sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online surveys targeted at: • EMN NCPs • National Migration Networks • Targeted interviews with: • EU bodies • EMN Service Provider • EMN SB national members • International and civil society organisations
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Information Exchange System (IES)		
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1.2 EFFICIENCY

Table 2 – Evaluation Matrix

Judgment criteria	Indicators and descriptors	Sources
EQ3 What are the benefits of the Council Decision 2008/381/EC and the actions carried out by the EMN? ¹		
<i>EQ3.1 What are the unexpected benefits brought by the EMN activities?</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EMN activities brought the benefits as illustrated in the intervention logic The EMN activities led to unexpected benefits that are not foreseen in the Council Decision 2008/381 or in the Work Programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (see indicators included under EQ1 and EQ2) Number and type of unexpected benefits brought by the EMN 	<p><u>Field sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online surveys targeted at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EMN NCPs National Migration Networks Targeted Interviews with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EU bodies EMN SB national members Case studies
EQ4 To what extent have the resources allocated to the EMN through the AMIF been sufficient for reaching the objectives of Council Decision 2008/381/EC and the actions carried out by the EMN?		
<i>EQ4.1 Does the current EMN grant allocation mechanisms support the efficient achievement of EMN objectives?</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The current grant allocation system promotes the efficient use of AMIF resources The allocation of AMIF grants is aligned with the needs of the EMN NCPs (i.e. the annual workload of each EMN NCP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amount of AMIF resources allocated to each NCP per year Percentage of resources used out of the resources allocated Level of alignment of the EMN grant allocation timeline with the timeline related to the implementation of activities Number of NCPs applicants per year 	<p><u>Desk sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EMN back-office documents <p><u>Field sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic interviews with the Commission Online surveys targeted at:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and type of actions financed through grants • Extent to which grant EMN NCPs agree that the EMN allocation meets their needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMN NCPs • National Migration Networks • Case studies
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EQ4.2 To what extent the development of EMN activities is cost effective?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EMN reaches the foreseen results by deploying reasonable financial and human resources • The allocation of AMIF resources is proportionate to the achievement of EMN objectives • The development of EMN activities implies a series of unexpected costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount of financial resources allocated to carry out EMN activities • Number of FTEs involved in the NCP management • Number and type of costs stemmed from the implementation of EMN activities • Number and type of unexpected costs stemming from the implementation of the EMN activities • Extent to which consulted stakeholders agree that costs entailed by the EMN are reasonable • Extent to which consulted stakeholders agree the EMN AMIF allocation is proportionate to the achievement of EMN objectives 	<p><u>Desk sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMN back-office documents <p><u>Field sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online surveys targeted at: • EMN NCPs • National Migration Networks • Targeted interviews with: • EMN SB national members • Case studies
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EQ5 Is the EMN sufficiently equipped to support its stakeholders in an appropriate manner?

EQ5.1 Does the Commission have the sufficient capacity to support and coordinate the EMN work?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Commission has sufficient resources to carry out its responsibilities vis-à-vis the EMN 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent to which the capacity of the Commission to support and coordinate the EMN work is perceived as sufficient 	<p><u>Field sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic interviews with the Commission • Online surveys targeted at: • EMN NCPs • Targeted interviews with: • EMN SB national members
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EQ5.2 Do the EMN structure and governance allow to support stakeholders in an efficient way?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current EMN structure supports the efficient 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent to which the EMN structure is perceived as supporting the 	<p><u>Desk sources</u></p>
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<p>functioning of the Network</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role and responsibilities are clear to and well distributed among EMN stakeholders • The Steering Board provides adequate strategic and political guidance of the EMN • The Steering Board identifies appropriate strategic cooperative relationships with EU bodies and international organisations in the field of migration and asylum • The NCPs adequately support national stakeholders • The NCPs provide regular contributions to EMN outputs • The National Migration Networks include relevant actors in the field of migration and asylum • A representative of the EU Parliament regularly participates as observer at the meetings of the Steering Board 	<p>functioning of the network</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent to which the Steering Board is perceived as supporting preparation and improvement of Work Programmes • Number and type of strategic cooperative relationships identified by the Steering Board • Level and type of advice provided by Steering Board to the NCPs • Level of awareness of EMN stakeholders about internal distribution of roles and responsibilities • Type and level of NCPs' support to national stakeholders • Level of representation of relevant national stakeholders in the National Migration Networks • Level of participation of the EU Parliament in the meetings of the Steering Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMN back-office documents <p><u>Field sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic interviews with the Commission • Online surveys targeted at: • EMN NCPs • National Migration Networks • Targeted interviews with: • EMN Service Provider • EMN SB national members • Case studies
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EQ5.3 Do EMN internal working practices enable the EMN to efficiently carry out its products and activities?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMN relies upon formalised internal working practices which are known to all key stakeholders • The timing of EMN outputs allow to produce high-quality products while ensuring that needed information is promptly exchanged with relevant external stakeholders • Internal EMN procedures ensure that stakeholders receive information on EMN products and activities in a timely manner • The working groups support NCPs in the development of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map of internal processes • Level of coverage of internal processes by formal/informal procedural documents • Level of awareness of internal procedures by key stakeholders • Number of EMN products that are delivered in line with internal procedures and planned deadlines • Number of NCPs involved in the working groups • Extent to which the NCPs perceive that working groups are efficiently supporting the realisation of EMN products and activities 	<p><u>Desk sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMN back-office documents <p><u>Field sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online surveys targeted at: • EMN NCPs • National Migration Networks • Targeted interviews with: • EMN Service Provider • EMN SB national
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EMN products and activities	members
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case studies

EQ6 How efficient is the EMN Service Provider?

EQ6.1 Is the current grant sufficient to allow the Service Provider to effectively support the EMN in line with the objectives of Council Decision 2008/381/EC and to provide the necessary support to implement the activities included in the annual programmes?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The financial and human resources allocated allow the EMN Service Provider to fully support the EMN The tasks allocated to the Service Provider allow it to be adequately integrated into the network mechanisms, thus supporting the network at various steps and levels of intervention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Role and responsibilities formally allocated to the Service Provider (including mapping of potential KPIs) Types of activities actually implemented by the Service Provider and evolution of the years Amount of financial resources allocated to EMN Service provider Amount of financial resources used by the EMN Service Provider Number of FTEs within the EMN Service Provider Extent to which EMN stakeholders perceive the Service Provider as efficient and supportive Extent to which consulted stakeholder agree that resources available to the EMN Service Provider are proportionate to its tasks 	<p><u>Desk sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EMN back-office documents <p><u>Field sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic interview with the Commission Online surveys targeted at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EMN NCPs Targeted interviews with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EMN Service Provider EMN SB national members Case studies
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EQ6.2 Is the quality of the Service Provider's contributions satisfactory?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EMN Service Provider ensures that the information included in the IES is of high quality The EMN Service Provider promptly updates the IES with relevant material The EMN Service Provider ensures that the agenda of the EMN meetings are in line with EMN objectives and activities set out in the Work Programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extent to which the day-to-day operations and coordination of the Service Provider are perceived as efficient and of high quality Extent to which the coordination of the Steering Board and NCP meetings is perceived as efficient and of high quality Extent to which the IES managed by the Service Provider is perceived of high quality Level of quality and clarity of the Service Provider's compilation and 	<p><u>Desk sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EMN back-office documents <p><u>Field sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic interview with the Commission Online surveys targeted at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EMN NCPs National Migration
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EMN Service Provider delivers a high-quality compilation and synthesis of the EMN reports and studies • The Commission and the EMN Service Provider communicates regularly on issues related to the organisational work of EMN • The EMN Service Provider promptly shares with the Steering Board and the NCPs all the relevant information (including the agenda) on their meetings • The EMN Service Provider coordinates adequately the inputs from the NCPs • The Commission, the NCPs and the Steering Board are satisfied by the quality of the contributions provided by the Service Provider 	<p>synthesis of the EMN products</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and types of communication exchanges between the Commission and the EMN Service Provider on the organisational work of EMN • Frequency of the EMN Service Provider uploads of new documents on the IES 	<p>Networks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted interviews with: • EMN Service Provider • EMN SB national members
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EQ6.3 Is the information flow between the Commission, the Service Provider, the Steering Board and EMN NCPs working well?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All concerned stakeholders provide feedback to the EMN • All concerned stakeholders are satisfied with the flow of information • Each stakeholder is open and responsive to input coming from the others 	<p>Type of information exchanged and frequency of exchanges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of timeliness of procedural information exchanged among EMN stakeholders • Level of clearness of procedural information exchanged among EMN stakeholders • Extent to which concerned stakeholders are satisfied with the EMN information flow • Extent to which the information flow between the Commission, the Service Provider, the Steering Board and the NCPs is perceived of high quality 	<p><u>Field sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic interview with the Commission • Online surveys targeted at: • EMN NCPs • National Migration Networks • Targeted interviews with: • EMN Service Provider • EMN SB national members • Case studies
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1.3 COHERENCE

Table 3 – Evaluation Matrix

Judgment criteria	Indicators and descriptors	Sources
EQ7 To what extent have the objectives and activities determined by Council Decision 2008/381/EC and the actions carried out by the EMN been coherent with relevant EU policy migration developments, notably those set out in the New Pact on Migration and Asylum such as the Migration Preparedness and Crisis Blueprint?		
<i>EQ7.1 To what extent are objectives and tasks set out in the Council Decision and objectives and specific priorities set out in the Work Programmes coherent with relevant policy developments set out in the New Pact on Migration and Asylum (e.g. Migration Preparedness and Crisis Blueprint)?</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EMN objectives and tasks set out in the Council Decision are consistent with the policy developments included in the New Pact on Migration and Asylum (e.g. Migration Preparedness and Crisis Blueprint) The EMN objectives and specific priorities set out in the Work Programmes are coherent with the policy developments included in the New Pact on Migration and Asylum (e.g. Migration Preparedness and Crisis Blueprint) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of complementarity between the Council Decision and the New pact on Migration and Asylum in terms of objectives, activities, stakeholders involved Number and type of complementarities between the Network's objectives and tasks and the New pact on Migration and Asylum as included in the EMN outputs and back-office documents Level of complementarity between the EMN Work Programmes and the New pact on Migration and Asylum in terms of objectives, activities, stakeholders involved Number and type of complementarities between the Work Programmes and the New pact on Migration and Asylum as included in the EMN outputs and back-office documents 	<p><u>Desk sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council Decision 2008/381/EC EU policy and legislative document (i.e. New Pact on Migration and Asylum) EMN products EMN back-office documents EMN Work Programmes <p><u>Field sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online surveys targeted at: EMN NCPs National Migration Networks Targeted interviews with: EU bodies International and civil society organisations
<i>EQ7.2 To what extent are objectives and tasks set out in the Council Decision and objectives and specific priorities set out in the Work Programmes coherent with other EU policy developments in the field of migration and asylum (EU Blue Card Directive and EU Action Plan on Migrant Smuggling)?</i>		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EMN objectives and tasks set out in the Council Decision are consistent with the EU Blue Card Directive and the EU Action Plan on Migrant Smuggling • The EMN objectives and specific priorities set out in the Work Programmes are coherent with the EU Blue Card Directive and the EU Action Plan on Migrant Smuggling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of complementarity between the Council Decision and key EU policy developments in the field of migration and asylum in terms of objectives, activities, stakeholders involved • Level of complementarity between the EMN Work Programmes and other relevant EU policy developments in terms of objectives, activities, stakeholders involved 	<p><u>Desk sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Decision 2008/381/EC • Relevant EU policy and legislative initiatives (i.e. EU Blue Card Directive, EU Action Plan on Migrant Smuggling) • EMN products • EMN back-office documents • EMN Work Programme <p><u>Field sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online surveys targeted at: • EMN NCPs • National Migration Networks • Targeted interviews with: • EU bodies
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EQ7.3 What are the overlaps and potential synergies between the objectives and the actions carried out by the EMN and those of the Commission?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are synergies between the objectives and tasks of the Council Decision and those of the Commission (EU strategy on voluntary return and reintegration) • Commission Communication on return and readmission) • There are overlaps between the objectives and tasks of the Council Decision and those of the Commission (EU strategy on voluntary return and reintegration) • Commission Communication on return and readmission) • Procedures are in place to identify potential complementarities with the Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and type of overlaps between the EMN objectives and actions and those of the Commission in the field of migration and asylum • Number and type of synergies between the EMN objectives and actions and those of the Commission in the field of migration and asylum • Number and type of complementarity procedures in place • Number and type of cooperation and coordination mechanisms 	<p><u>Desk sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMN Work Programmes • EMN products • EU policy and legislative documents <p><u>Field sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online surveys targeted at: • EMN NCPs • National Migration Networks • Targeted interviews with: • EU bodies
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperation and coordination are pursued with the Commission 	<p>in place</p>	
<p>EQ8 To what extent have the objectives and activities determined by Council Decision 2008/381/EC and the actions carried out by the EMN been coherent with other objectives and activities of Member States and EU agencies, including notably EUAA, FRONTEX, EUROPOL and FRA?</p>		
<p>EQ8.1 To what extent are objectives and tasks set out in the Council Decision coherent with other objectives and activities of the Member States? Are there any overlaps and potential synergies between the objectives and the actions carried out by the EMN and those of the Member States?</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EMN objectives and actions are in line with those of the Member States There are overlaps between the objectives and tasks of the Council Decision and those of Member States There are synergies between the objectives and tasks of the Council Decision and those of the Member States There are overlaps between the objectives and tasks of the Council Decision and those of the Member States Procedures are in place to identify potential complementarities with the Member States Cooperation and coordination are pursued with the Member States 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of complementarity between the Council Decision and other relevant national migration policy developments in terms of objectives, activities, stakeholders involved Number and type of overlaps between the EMN objectives and actions and those of the Member States Number and type of synergies between the EMN objectives and actions and those of the Member States Number and type of complementarity procedures in place Number and type of cooperation and coordination mechanisms in place 	<p><u>Desk sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EMN Work Programmes EMN products EMN outputs, including minutes and supporting documents of relevant meetings National strategies in the field of migration and asylum <p><u>Field sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online survey targeted at: EMN NCPs National Migration Networks Targeted interviews with: EMN SB national members Case studies
<p>EQ8.2 To what extent are the objectives and tasks set out in the Council Decisions coherent with other objectives and activities of relevant EU agencies? Are there any overlaps and potential synergies between the objectives and the actions carried out by the EMN and those of relevant EU agencies?</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EMN objectives and actions are consistent with those of relevant EU agencies There are contradictions between the objectives and tasks of the Council Decision and those of relevant EU agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of complementarity between the Council Decision and other relevant EU agencies in terms of objectives, activities, stakeholders involved 	<p><u>Desk sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EMN Work Programmes EMN products Legal basis of four EU agencies (i.e. EUAA, EUROPOL, Frontex, FRA)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are synergies between the objectives and tasks of the Council Decision and those of relevant EU agencies • There are overlaps between the objectives and tasks of the Council Decision and those of relevant EU agencies • Procedures are in place to identify potential complementarities with relevant EU agencies • Cooperation and coordination are pursued with relevant EU agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and type of overlaps between the EMN objectives and actions and those of relevant EU agencies • Number and type of synergies between the EMN objectives and actions and those of relevant EU agencies • Number and type of complementarity procedures in place • Number and type of cooperation and coordination mechanisms in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work programmes of four EU agencies (i.e. EUAA, EUROPOL, Frontex, FRA) • EMN back-office documents • <u>Field sources</u> • Online surveys targeted at: • EMN NCPs • National Migration Networks • Targeted interviews with: • EU bodies
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1.4 EU ADDED VALUE

Table 4 – Evaluation Matrix

Judgment criteria	Indicators and descriptors	Sources
EQ9 What is the European added value of Council Decision 2008/381/EC and the actions carried out by the EMN? Could the main findings (results/outputs) presented in the evaluation have been achieved without EU intervention?		
EQ9.1 In the absence of the EMN, to what extent could the information needs of EU and national authorities have been met?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant EU and national information needs are identified and met through alternative mechanisms than those provided by the EMN • There are various learning and capacity-building mechanisms alternative to the EMN that support EU and national policymakers in addressing current, new and emerging needs in the field of migration and asylum • EU and national 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type of alternative mechanisms used to identify information needs in the field of migration and asylum (surveys, databases, exchanges of information, etc.) • Level of overlapping/complementarity of these mechanisms with EMN activities (e.g. capture same information needs, produce same information, etc.) • Type of alternative sources of information on migration and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Desk sources</u> • Relevant initiatives/products developed outside the EMN providing information in the field of migration and asylum targeted at EU and national policymakers (as mentioned during stakeholder consultations) • <u>Field sources</u> • Online surveys targeted at: • EMN NCPs

<p>policy-makers in the field of migration and asylum are adequately supported without EMN outputs</p>	<p>asylum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent to which alternative sources of information are used by EU and national policy-makers • Extent to which relevant EU and national stakeholders rely on other sources than those provided by the EMN • Areas where relevant EU and national stakeholders see the EU added value of the EMN 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Migration Networks • Targeted interviews with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU bodies • EMN SB national members • Case studies
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*EQ9.2 In the absence of the EMN, to what extent could the information needs of the **general public** have been met?*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are alternative channels different from EMN that provide the general public with reliable and up-to-date information in the field of migration and asylum • There are various I and mechanisms alternative to the EMN that contribute towards the development of mutual understanding on migration and asylum issues within the EU • The EMN provides the general public with more comprehensive and higher quality information compared to information already available through other sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and type of EU level initiatives/events targeted at the general public in the field of migration and asylum • Type and quality of information disseminated by these channels • Level of overlapping between EMN disseminated content and content already available through other channels • Outreach of these channels • Outreach of EMN dissemination activities • Extent to which representatives of the general public see the added value of EMN activities 	<p><u>Desk sources:</u></p> <p>Relevant initiatives/products developed outside the EMN providing the general public with information on migration and asylum</p> <p><u>Field sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online surveys targeted at: • National Migration Networks • Targeted interviews with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU bodies • International and civil society organisations
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EQ9.3 What are other likely consequences of not having an EMN, if any?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The capacity to identify and meet EU and national information needs is likely to be undermined without EMN • The absence of EMN will undermine a mutual understanding on migration and asylum issues within the EU and with relevant third countries <p>The absence of EMN will decrease the capacity of EU and national</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent to which stakeholders consider that the absence of the EMN would affect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the capacity to identify and meet EU and national information needs • a mutual understanding on migration and asylum issues within the EU and with relevant third countries • the capacity of EU and national 	<p><u>Field sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online surveys targeted at: • EMN NCPs • National Migration Networks • Targeted interviews with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU bodies • EMN SB national members
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stakeholders to respond to the current, new and emerging migration challenges	stakeholders to respond to current, new and emerging migration challenges	
EQ10 What is the additional value resulting from EMN products and activities compared to what could be achieved by Member States at national and/or local levels?		
<i>EQ10.1 What is the additional value of the EMN products compared to what could be achieved by Member States at national and/or local levels?</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EMN products include comprehensive and comparative information on migration and asylum issues that cannot be produced by Member States alone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List of products available at the national level focusing on migration and asylum Similarities and differences between EMN products and any similar national products Extent to which EMN products are perceived as having a higher level of quality, timeliness, relevance, reliability and comparability than alternative sources of information available at the national level 	<p><u>Desk sources:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EMN products <p><u>Field sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online surveys targeted at: EMN NCPs National Migration Networks Case studies
<i>EQ10.2 What is the additional value of the EMN networking events compared to what could be achieved by Member States at national and/or local levels?</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EMN prompts the establishment of new National Migration Networks The EMN boosts networking events that could have not been realised by Member States alone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number and type of National Migration Networks that were present before the EMN set-up Number and type of National Migration Networks that were created after the EMN set-up Number and type of national events on migration and asylum realised outside the EMN framework Extent to which EMN networking events are perceived as having added value compared to events organised at the national level 	<p><u>Desk sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EMN products EMN back-office documents <p><u>Field sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online surveys targeted at: EMN NCPs National Migration Networks Case studies
EQ11 To what extent are the outcomes of Council Decision 2008/381/EC and the actions carried out by the EMN sustainable? Are the effects likely to last after the intervention ends?		
<i>EQ11.1 What measures were adopted to ensure that the identified outcomes and impacts will continue after the intervention ends?</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mechanisms and procedures at the EU level are in place to ensure that EU and national 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Types of mechanisms and procedures in place (besides the EMN legal basis) to ensure: (i) 	<p><u>Desk sources</u></p>

<p>information needs are met even after the intervention ends</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mechanisms and procedures at the EU level are in place to ensure cooperation within the EU and with third countries on migration and asylum issues • Member States adopted procedures to ensure the sustainability of EMN activities even after the intervention ends • Member States support with national funding the actions currently carried out by the NCPs and the National Migration Networks 	<p>that EU and national information needs are collected and met and (ii) cooperation within the EU and with third countries on migration and asylum issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent to which existing mechanisms and procedures in place ensure that EU and national information needs are collected and met after the intervention ends • Extent to which mechanisms and procedures in place ensure cooperation within the EU and with third countries on migration and asylum issues after the intervention ends • Types of procedures adopted at the national level to ensure the sustainability of EMN activities after the intervention ends • Types of organisational settings adopted at the national level in the field of migration and asylum (roles and responsibilities) • Extent to which Member States support with national funding the actions carried out by the National Migration Networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMN products • EU legislative and policy initiatives • EMN back-office documents • Strategic interviews with the Commission • Online surveys targeted at: • EMN NCPs • Targeted interviews with: • EMN SB national members • Case studies
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EQ12 Is the Council Decision 2008/381/EC still an adequate basis of the actions of the EMN?

EQ12.1 Does the Council Decision 2008/381/EC provide the sufficient mandate for the EMN to fully achieve its **current objectives**?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council Decision is the most appropriate legal basis to achieve the current EMN objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key results achieved by the EMN activities (resulting from the effectiveness criterion) • Level of clarity of the Council Decision's provisions • Level of coherence, adequacy and burdens of the EMN twofold mechanism (Council Decision e Work Programmes) • Level of adequacy of the financing mechanism to the types of activities implemented by the 	<p><u>Desk sources:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Decision 2008/381/EC • EMN products • EMN back-office documents <p><u>Field sources:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic interview with the Commission • Online surveys targeted at:
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	<p>EMN and their key features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Type of limitations of the Council Decision as reported in EMN products/back-office documents and by stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EMN NCPs Targeted interviews with: EMN SB national members
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EQ12.2 Does Council Decision 2008/381/EC provide the sufficient flexibility for the EMN to address *new objectives and emerging priorities*?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council Decision is the most appropriate legal basis to fully meet new objectives and emerging priorities included in the Work Programmes Other legal instruments (e.g. Directive, Regulation) provide a more appropriate legal basis to EMN to fully meet new objectives and emerging priorities included in the Work Programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List of objectives and priorities included in the Work Programmes since 2018 Level of correspondence between the objectives and task set out in the Council Decision and the objectives and priorities of the Work Programmes Alignment of changes in the EMN mandate and activities with key changes in the policy field Level of flexibility and adaptability of EMN as reported in EMN back-office documents and by stakeholders 	<p><u>Desk sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council Decision 2008/381/EC EMN Work Programmes Legal basis of selected similar Networks EMN products EMN back-office documents <p><u>Field sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic interview with the Commission Online surveys targeted at: EMN NCPs Targeted interviews with: EMN SB national members
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EQ13 Could the results, delivered through the implementation of the Council Decision 2008/381/EC and the actions carried out by the EMN have been achieved with less European funding? Could the use of other policy instruments or mechanisms, at European and/or national level, have provided better cost-effectiveness?

EQ13.1 To what extent does the achievement of the identified outcomes and impacts depend on AMIF resources? Could other sources have been used to achieve the same or better results?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified results and impacts can be achieved with less AMIF resources Identified results and impacts are better achieved through other EU funding streams Identified results and impacts can be achieved through national funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amount of resources allocated to the different EMN activities Burdens and procedural features linked to the use of AMIF resources Results of EMN activities (as resulting from the effectiveness analysis) List of alternative EU funding 	<p><u>Desk sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EMN back-office documents (i.e. documents on financial management) Legal basis of selected EU networks <p><u>Field sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online surveys targeted at:
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	<p>mechanisms in the field of migration and asylum (scope, amount, administrative burden and key features)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of coverage of EMN actions by alternative EU funding mechanisms • National funding mechanisms that cover the activities implemented by MS in the framework of the EMN • Extent to which alternative funding mechanisms (EU and national) allow the achievement of similar/better results • Types of funding mechanisms used by other selected EU networks and results achieved by these networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMN NCPs • Targeted interviews with: • EMN SB national members • Case studies
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1.5 RELEVANCE

Table 5 – Evaluation Matrix

Judgment criteria	Indicators and descriptors	Sources
EQ14 To what extent have Council Decision 2008/381/EC and the actions carried out by the EMN been relevant in view of the EU’s needs/challenges and are they still relevant in view of current needs and challenges?		
<i>EQ14.1 To what extent have the Council Decision and the actions carried out by the EMN been relevant to evolving EU’s needs/challenges?</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectives and tasks set out in the Council Decision have been relevant to migration and asylum needs and challenges as they evolved over the years • Objectives and tasks set out in the Council Decision are still relevant to current needs in the field of migration and asylum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type of changes occurred between 2018 and 2021 • Level of correspondence between identified changes and the EMN objectives and tasks • Extent to which consulted stakeholders agree that the actions carried out by the EMN matched key information needs related 	<p><u>Desk sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Decision 2008/381/EC • EMN products • Scientific literature, as well as relevant studies and reports, focusing on migration and asylum <p><u>Field sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online surveys targeted at:

	to migration and asylum in the EU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMN NCPs • National Migration Networks • Targeted interviews with: • EU bodies • International and civil society organisations • Case studies
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EQ14.2 To what extent have the actions carried out by the EMN been relevant and are still relevant to current and emerging EU's needs/challenges ?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The objectives and priorities included in the EMN Work Programmes matched main needs in the field of migration and asylum as they evolved over the years • The objectives and priorities included in the EMN Work programmes are relevant to new and emerging needs and challenges in the field of migration and asylum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type of new needs and challenges in the field of migration and asylum • Number and type of new objectives and priorities set out in the EMN Work Programmes • Extent to which stakeholders consider the objectives and task set out in the Council Decision correspond to evolving migration and asylum related needs and challenges 	<p><u>Desk sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Decision 2008/381/EC • EMN Work Programmes • EMN products • EMN back-office documents • Scientific literature, as well as relevant studies and reports, focusing on migration and asylum <p><u>Field sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic interview with the Commission • Online surveys targeted at: • EMN NCPs • Targeted interviews with: • EU bodies • Direct observation of EMN meetings • Case studies
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EQ15 To what extent have Council Decision 2008/381/EC and the actions carried out by the EMN been relevant in view of specific needs of stakeholders, in particular MS and civil society?

EQ15.1 To what extent has the Council Decision been relevant in view of specific needs of stakeholders, in particular national authorities and civil society organisations?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objectives and tasks set out in the Council Decision have been relevant to the needs of national stakeholders Objectives and tasks set out in the Council Decision have been relevant to the needs of relevant Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of adequacy of the objectives and tasks set out in the Council Decision with specific stakeholders' needs Extent to which consulted stakeholders (i.e. national stakeholders and civil society organisations) consider the objectives and tasks set out in the Council Decision as adequate their respective needs 	<p><u>Desk sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council Decision 2008/381/EC) EMN products EMN back-office documents <p><u>Field sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online surveys targeted at: EMN NCPs Targeted interviews with: EMN SB national members International and civil society organisations Direct observation of EMN meetings Case studies
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EQ15.2 To what extent have the actions carried out by the EMN been relevant in view of specific needs of stakeholders, in particular national authorities and civil society organisations?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objectives and tasks set out in the EMN Work Programmes have been relevant to the needs of national stakeholders Objectives and tasks set out in the EMN Work Programmes have been relevant to the needs of relevant CSOs The analyses and information included in the EMN products (e.g. ARM, studies) are relevant to current stakeholders' needs The topics covered by EMN activities and events are relevant to current needs and challenges faced by different 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of adequacy of the analysis and information included in the EMN products with specific stakeholders' needs Extent to which stakeholders (e.g. national stakeholders and civil society organisations) consider the objectives and tasks set out in the EMN Work Programmes relevant to their current needs Extent to which stakeholders (e.g. national stakeholders and civil society organisations) consider the analysis and 	<p><u>Desk sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council Decision 2008/381/EC) EMN products EMN back-office documents <p><u>Field sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online surveys targeted at: EMN NCPs Targeted interviews with: EMN SB national members International and civil society organisations
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stakeholders.	information included in the EMN products relevant to their current needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case studies
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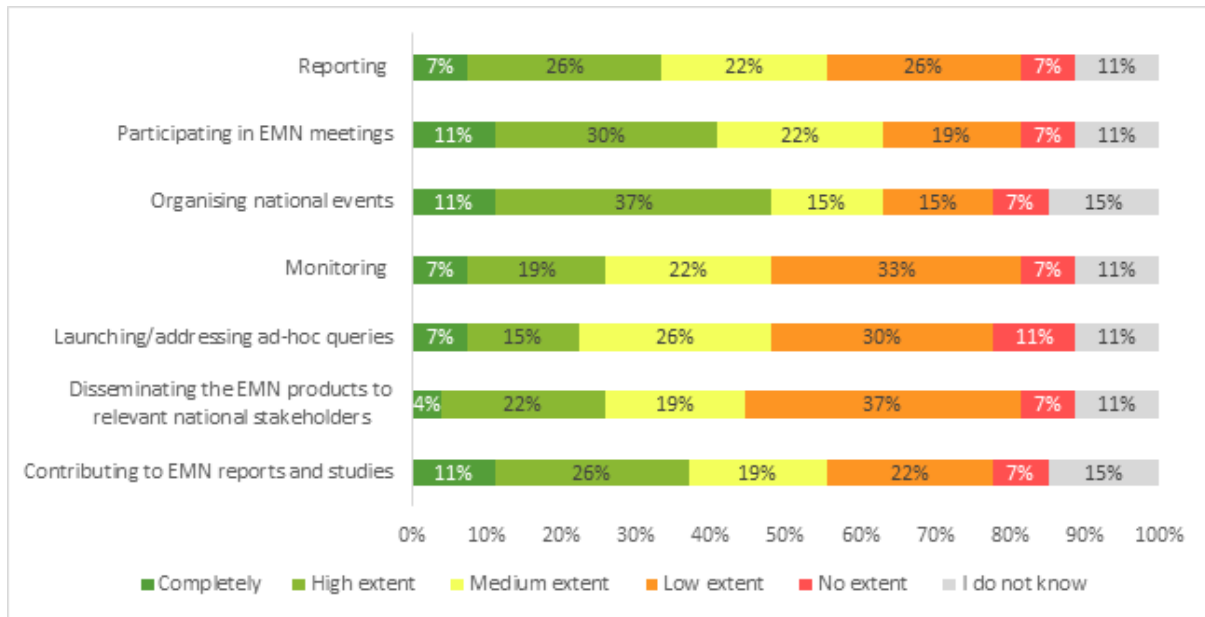
ANNEX IV OVERVIEW OF BENEFITS AND COSTS

A fully-fledged quantification of costs (e.g. cost-benefit analysis and standard cost model) was not possible in the context of the evaluation, as, e.g. the *ex post* financial reporting has not been completed, and the actual level of budget implementation is not yet known. Similarly, the one-in one-out approach was not relevant, as the Network is not directly involved in legislating.

The focus of the evaluation was on the benefits to properly assess the added value for the Member States of being part of the EMN and more emphasis was put on the analysis of the NCPs as part of the case studies and most notably on: how they were structured, how they engaged national constituencies and, eventually, what was the added value perceived at the national level from being part of the EMN.

The perception of consulted stakeholders of the costs and benefits of various EMN activities was analysed and is presented in Figures 1 and 2 and in Table 1 below.

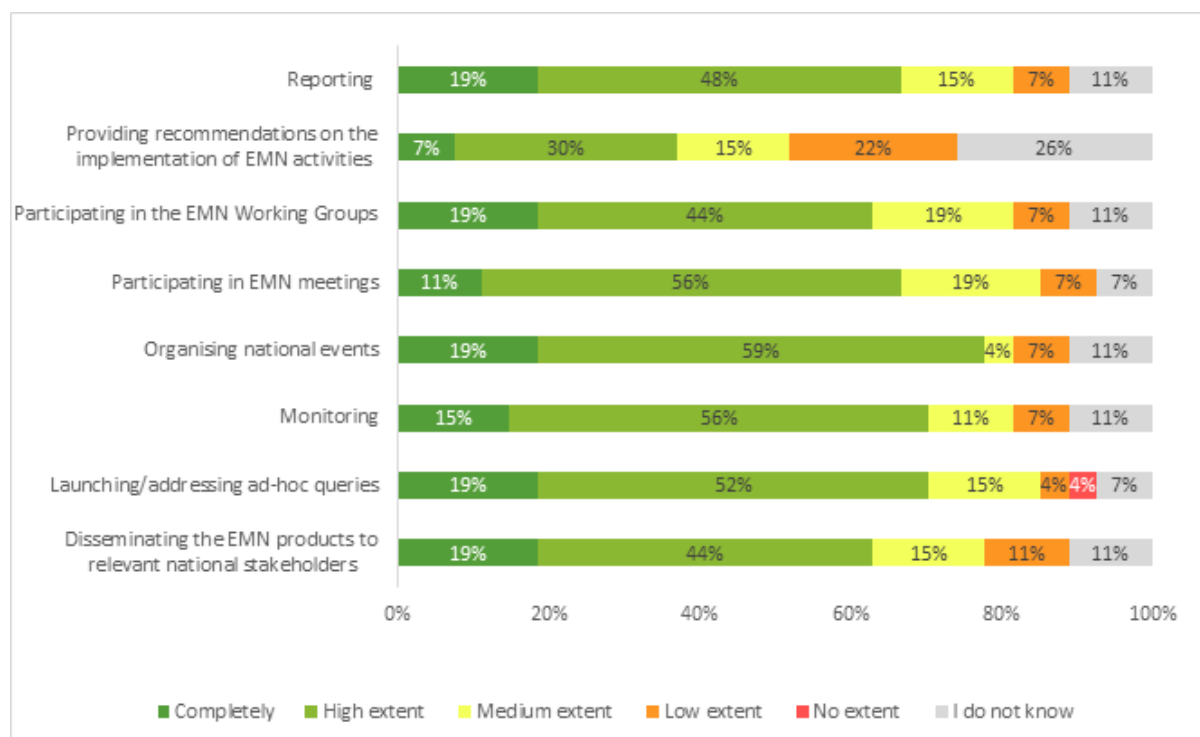
Figure 1 – Perception of consulted stakeholders on the cost burden at the NCP level entailed by EMN activities¹



Source: Independent external evaluation of the European Migration Network 2018-2021. Final report.

Figure 1 presents the analysis results of the perception of consulted stakeholders² of the cost burden generated by the various categories of EMN activities for the NCPs, on a 6-level scale of: very high (dark green), high (light green), medium (yellow), low (orange), very low (red) and no opinion (gray).

Figure 2 – Perception of consulted stakeholders on the benefit-cost ratio of the various EMN activities³



Source: Independent external evaluation of the European Migration Network 2018-2021. Final report.

Figure 2 presents the analysis results of the perception of consulted stakeholders⁴ of the benefit-cost ratio generated by the various categories of EMN activities for the NCPs, on a 6-level scale of: very high (dark green), high (light green), medium (yellow), low (orange), very low (red) and no opinion (gray).

Table 1 presents the perceptions of consulted stakeholders⁵ on the cost burden (on the scale from 0 to 4 where 0 stands for no cost, 1 for low cost, 2 for medium cost, 3 for high cost and 4 for extreme cost) and on cost-effectiveness (on the scale from 0 to 4 where 1 stands for extremely low, 1 for low, 2 for medium, 3 for high and 4 extremely high cost-effectiveness) of the various EMN activities.

According to the results, organisation of national events and participation in NCP meetings were perceived as the most cost-generating activities (medium cost), while the perception regarding the remaining activity categories was between the low and medium cost levels. Cost-effectiveness of all the analysed activities was perceived to be situated in the middle of the scale (between medium and high cost effectiveness).

Table 1 – Perception by consulted stakeholders of the cost-benefits ratio of EMN activities

Activity	Costs ⁶	Benefits	Cost-effectiveness ⁷
Monitoring	1.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of comparable information • Contribution to the development of indicators and statistics 	2.6
Launching/addressing AHQs	1.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of quick responses to urgent needs • Provision of information to design national legislation • Approximation of national policymaking 	2.6
Organising national events	2.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exchange of knowledge and practices • Increased awareness of the EMN activities • Networking opportunities • Fostering open debate 	2.7
Contributing to EMN products	1.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eased access information • Spread knowledge and raise awareness • Shaping policy and legislative initiatives 	2.6
Participating in EMN meetings	2.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking opportunities • Identification of synergies among organisations • Establishment of cooperative working practices 	2.6
Disseminating EMN products at the national level	1.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased awareness of the information produced by the EMN beyond the Network's members • Provision of updated information 	2.5

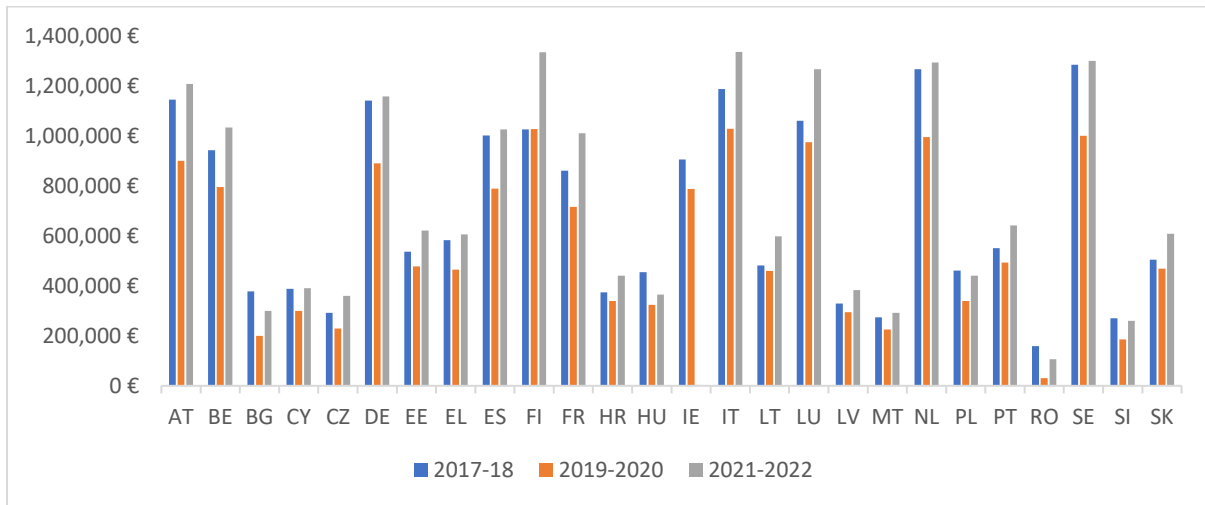
Source: Independent external evaluation of the European Migration Network 2018-2021. Final report.

Table 2 – Overview of costs and benefits identified in the evaluation

Overview of costs and benefits identified in the evaluation							
		Citizens		Administrations of EU Member States		European Commission	
		Quantitative	Comment	Quantitative	Comment	Quantitative	Comment
EMN functioning							
Costs identified	<i>Direct compliance costs one-off</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>		<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>
	<i>Direct compliance costs recurrent</i>				<i>Implementation of the WPs by the NCPs (co-financing from the national budgets)</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>Grants for the operation of NCPs (up to 95%)</i> <i>EMN Service Provider-related costs (procurement)</i> <i>EMN IT (EMN IES) - related costs (procurement)</i>
	<i>Enforcement costs one-off</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>
	<i>Enforcement costs recurrent</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>
	<i>Indirect costs (indirect compliance or transaction costs)</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>
	Benefits identified	<i>Direct benefits: one-off</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>
	<i>Direct</i>		<i>Provision of</i>		<i>Provision of</i>		<i>Provision of</i>

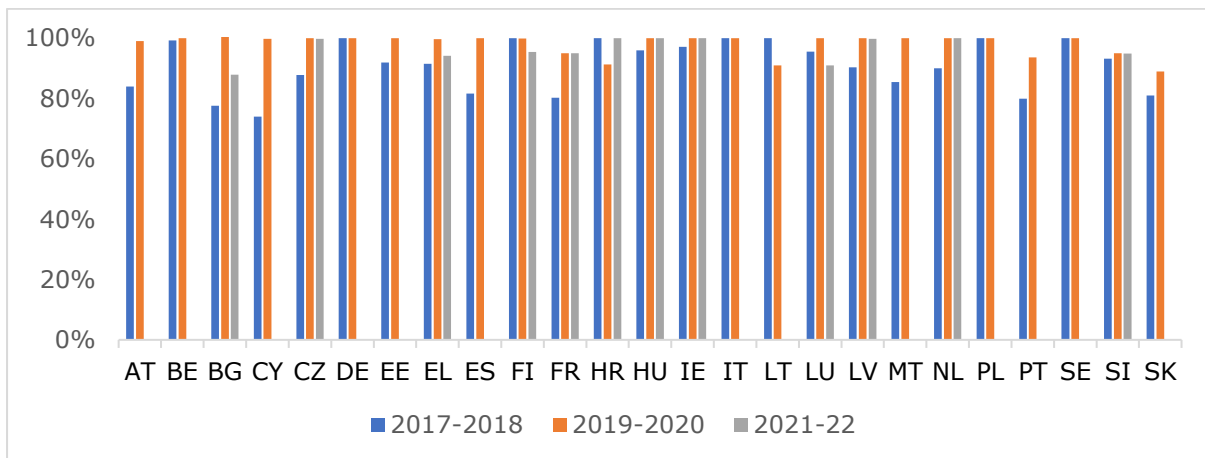
	<i>benefits: recurrent</i>		<i>comparable information on migration</i> <i>Knowledge spreading and awareness raising</i> <i>Fostering open debates</i>		<i>comparable information and contribution to the development of migration- specific indicators and statistics</i> <i>Provision of quick reliable responses to urgent requests for information</i> <i>Safe exchange of information through the EMN IES</i>		<i>comparable information and contribution to the development of migration- specific indicators and statistics</i> <i>Provision of quick reliable responses to urgent requests for information</i> <i>Safe exchange of information through the EMN IES</i>
	<i>Indirect benefits: one- off</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>
	<i>Indirect benefits: recurrent</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>

Figure 3 – EMN grants allocated to Member States (2017-2022)⁴²



Source: Independent external evaluation of the European Migration Network 2018-2021. Final report.

Figure 4 – Percentage of EMN grants awarded per Member State (2017-2022)⁴³

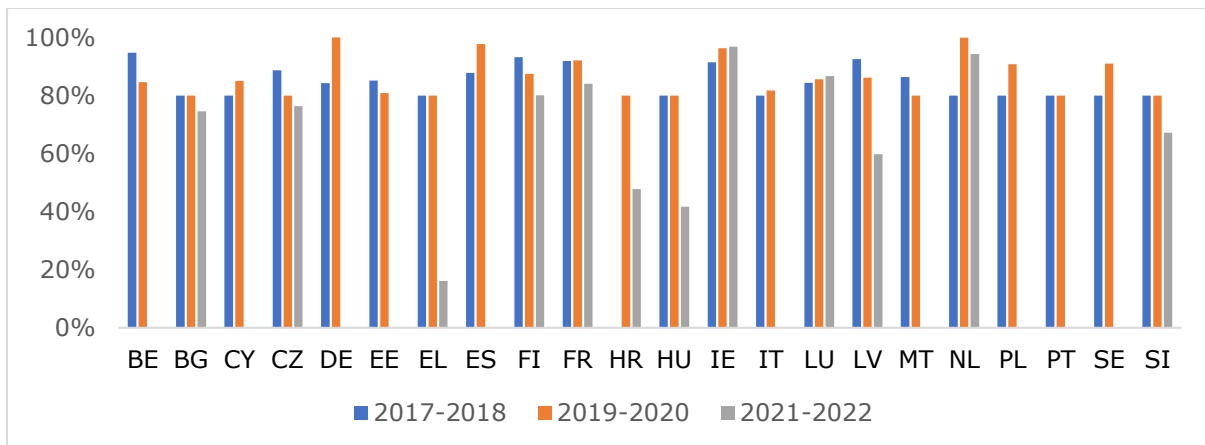


Source: Independent external evaluation of the European Migration Network 2018-2021. Final report.

⁴² Data concerning grant allocation to Ireland were not available for 2021-2022.

⁴³ Grant allocation data were not available for Romania. In addition, grant data for Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Germany, Estonia, Spain, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Sweden and Slovakia were not available for the 2021–2022 work programme period.

Figure 5 – Percentage of EMN grant spent per Member State (2017-2022)⁴⁴



Source: Independent external evaluation of the European Migration Network 2018-2021. Final report.

⁴⁴ Grant allocation data were not available for Austria, Lithuania, Romania and Slovakia. Data for Croatia were not available for the 2017-2018 Work Programme period. Data for Belgium, Cyprus, Germany, Estonia, Spain, Italy, Malta, Poland, Portugal and Sweden were not available for the 2021-2022 period.

ANNEX V STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTATION. SYNOPSIS REPORT.

1. Feedback received on the Call for Evidence

Twenty-five stakeholders submitted feedback on the evaluation call for evidence (feedback period 16 January 2023 - 13 March 2023). Twenty-four stakeholders providing their feedback were EU citizens while one was under ‘Other’ category. None of the feedback was directly related to the EMN while most of the submissions were general statements in favour of tightening the EU migration policy.

2. Consultation strategy

The objective of the consultations was to collect relevant information and insights on the effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, EU added value and relevance of the EMN as well as to collect inputs on lessons learned. To do so, a wide range of EU, international and national level stakeholders were consulted.

The consultations that took place during the implementation of the supporting study included the following:

- online survey,
- strategic interviews,
- targeted and flash interviews,
- case studies and workshop with NCP coordinators.

Table 1 – Overview of the stakeholders reached through each consultation tool/method

Type of stakeholder	Online survey	Strategic interviews	Targeted interviews	Flash interviews	Case studies	Workshop with NCP coordinators
Commission		X				
NCPs	X		X	X	X	X
SB members			X			
National Migration Networks	X				X	
EU bodies			X			

International Organisations			X			
Civil Society Organisations			X			
Researchers/academics			X			

2.1 Online survey

An online survey was launched to (i) collect information on the effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, EU added value and relevance of the EMN, (ii) understand the problems/gaps affecting the functioning and effects of the EMN, as well as (iii) gather suggestions for future-looking recommendations.

Two different survey questionnaires were used, targeted respectively at 29 National Contact Points (NCPs), and 555 National Migration Network members.

The survey ran from 5 September 2023 to 29 October 2023. The survey has been administered and centrally managed by using the Qualtrics tool.

2.2 Strategic interviews

A strategic interview was conducted at the beginning of the evaluation with the EMN chair - Head of Sector, Task Force Irregular Migration and the Policy officer responsible for EMN budget. The strategic interview explored the following points:

- Changes occurred since the last evaluation, as regards both the EMN working mechanisms and its context of reference
- Current state of play of migration and asylum in the EU, including known problems and main issues at stake.
- Level of engagement of various stakeholders in the EMN activities
- Relationships/partnerships with other EU agencies/bodies
- State of implementation of the objectives set in the WPs, along with factors that might have adversely/positively affected their achievement.
- Categories of costs/benefits associated with participation in the Network.

2.3 Flash interviews

10 flash interviews were performed with NCPs which volunteered to be interviewed in the occasion of the 129 NCP meeting held in Brussels on 29 June 2023. These interviews focused on the following points:

- Overview of the NCP participation in and contribution to the EMN activities
- Main strengths and weaknesses of the EMN activities

2.4 Targeted interviews

A total of 33 targeted interviews were conducted online via Teams, with 23 members of the EMN SB, 4 EU bodies, 2 international organisations, 3 CSOs and 1 academic.

Interviews with EU-level stakeholders focused on:

- Developments in the EU migration and asylum landscape
- Role of EU Agencies contributing to migration and asylum policies, and challenges faced in achieving higher coordination.
- Collaborations/partnerships developed with the Network.
- Burdens/benefits associated with engaging with the EMN.
- Recommendations to improving the EMN functioning and mandate.
- Good practices to be considered.

Interviews with national stakeholders focused on:

- Relevant national developments in the field of migration and asylum
- Dissemination/outreach of the Network at the national and local levels
- Categories of costs/benefits associated with participation in the Network.
- Collaboration/partnership developed with/through the Network.
- Factors that might have adversely/positively affected the achievement of the EMN objectives.
- Good practices implemented at the local/regional level.

Interviews with international and civil society organisations focused on:

- Opinion on relevance, quality, availability and accessibility of EMN outputs, as well as any suggestions for improvement
- Experience in using EMN tools.
- Involvement in EMN networking activities
- Channels/networks/organisations preferred to the EMN.

Targeted interviews with representatives from academia focused on:

- Overall quality of the EMN publications
- Relevance of the topics covered by the EMN activities.
- Added value of the EMN

2.5 Case studies

Six case studies were performed on Bulgaria, Cyprus, Finland, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands in order to better demonstrate some aspects of the evaluation, gain further insights and draw recommendations to improve the functioning of the EMN.

Case study consultations were conducted via Microsoft Teams and included:

- Six group interviews with the NCP.
- Five focus groups with members of the National Migration Networks.¹

2.6 Workshop with NCP coordinators

A workshop with NCP coordinators was organised at the end of the evaluation process with NCP coordinators (24 participants) to present the evaluation findings and related conclusions, and to discuss the feasibility of the preliminary recommendations under assessment.

The workshop consisted of a (1) plenary session, where the evaluation team presented the objectives of the study and the key evaluation findings, followed by a Q&A section with participants; (2) two break-out sessions during which preliminary recommendations and lessons learnt were addressed and discussed with smaller groups of participants; and (3) a second plenary session in which the outcomes of the break-out sessions were presented.

3. Results of the consultation activities

3.1 Online survey

3.1.1 Effectiveness

The majority of NCPs agreed that the EMN supported EU policymaking in the field of migration and asylum. In particular:

- 89% believed that the information produced by the EMN has been used to identify and respond to EU policy priorities and has supported the design and implementation of new EU policy initiatives.
- 59% agreed that the EMN highly contributed to informing national policymaking. Moreover,

- 56% agreed that the EMN supported cooperation between Member States.
- 86% agreed that that participation in EMN Working Groups enhanced operational cooperation 93% agreed that that participation in EMN Working Groups enhanced knowledge sharing among the Member States.

Moreover, most NCPs and National Migration Network members agreed, from a medium to a complete extent, that the information produced by the EMN was accessible (99%; 91%), comparable (97%; 93%), easily readable (89%; 89%), objective (100%; 100%), reliable (100%; 95%) and up to date (92%; 90%). Finally, while 89% of NCPs highlighted that the EMN was increasingly used as a platform for knowledge exchange in the field of migration and asylum in their respective countries, only 58% of members of the National Migration Networks agreed with this statement.

Concerning the provision of information to the general public, some divergencies emerged between the opinions provided by NCPs and those provided by the National Migration Network members. In particular:

- 44% of NCPs believed that the EMN contributed to providing information on migration and asylum to the general public, against 13% of the national network members.
- 70% of NCPs agreed that the EMN dissemination activities contributed to increasing the Network's visibility within the EU, against 22% of the national network members who believed that the EMN dissemination activities contributed to increasing the EMN visibility in their respective countries.

Finally, both NCPs and National Migration Network members agreed that the EMN played a limited role in countering false narratives on migration, as well as in enhancing communication with the media on migration and asylum policies.

3.1.2 Efficiency

Most consulted NCPs (75%) believed that AMIF resources were sufficient to implement EMN activities. Moreover, NCPs highlighted that the costs were proportionate to the benefits obtained from such activities.

With regards to the EMN's governance, NCPs largely agreed that the EMN's internal structure was appropriate, as it allowed for the efficient management of the Network's activities (52%) which is facilitated by a substantial level of awareness of internal roles and responsibilities (48%).

The majority of NCPs were satisfied with the support both provided by the SB (51%) and the Service Provider (63%).

3.1.3 Coherence

NCPs believed that the EMN was overall consistent with the New Pact on migration and asylum (66%), the EU Blue Card Directive (40%) and the EU Action plan against migrant smuggling (48%). National Migration Network members however, proved to be more hesitant in this regard, as 37% believed there was consistency with the New Pact on migration and asylum, 21% with EU Blue Card Directive and 21% with the EU Action plan against migrant smuggling.

Concerning the consistency of the EMN with other relevant EU Agencies, 7 NCPs highlighted a degree of overlap between the EMN activities and those of EUAA, which leads to a duplication of work for those who are involved with both agencies.

3.1.4 EU added value

Most of the NCPs agreed that many advantages brought by the EMN could not have been achieved without the support of the Network. Such advantages include the capacity to respond to the information needs of national policymakers (71% NCPs) and to facilitate the exchange of good practices among the Member States in the field of migration and asylum (86% NCPs). Moreover, many NCPs and national network members agreed that the information produced by the EMN is better in terms of quality (67%; 49%), comprehensiveness (85%; 60%) and relevance (56%; 42%) compared to the alternative sources available in their respective countries. Finally, it was found that it would be difficult to ensure continuation of EMN activities such as ensuring existence of national networks, exchanging information with third countries and drafting annual policy reports on the national situation in the field of migration and asylum, if EMN was discontinued.

However, 82% NCPs and 66% national network members believed that regular collection of national data relevant to migration and asylum would continue in the absence of EMN. Similarly, 78% NCPs and 52% national network members believed that the exchange of information with other Member States would not be affected.

To conclude, around 40% NCPs agreed that Council Decision 2008/381/EC provides sufficient mandate towards the achievement of the EMN objectives.

3.1.5 Relevance

Most of the NCPs and the national network members consulted during the study think that the EMN products have met their information needs in the field of migration and asylum. Yet, while 46% of NCPs and 33% of national network members agreed that the information and knowledge produced by the EMN responded to the information needs of the national policymakers in their respective countries, most national network members (52%) believe that the EMN is only partially aligned with the information needs of the general public.

All the NCPs and majority of the national network members (77%) think that the existence of a European Network is still needed to meet the information needs related to migration and asylum in their countries.

3.2 Strategic interviews

The following points were discussed:

The functioning and scope of the EMN. The EMN has a strategic and operational nature. It is a complex entity regulated by formal rules (e.g. Council Decision 2008/381/EC, WPs, etc.) and works on a dynamic basis, based on discussions and negotiations between the Commission and the Member States towards maximising the Network's results and influence. Its scope of activities recently broadened to include new relevant topics in the field of migration and asylum, such as children in migration, unaccompanied migrants, and displaced persons caused by the war in Ukraine.

The added value of the EMN. The EMN allows for regular and practical interaction among the Member States towards tackling challenges related to migration and asylum in the EU. EMN outputs support national policymaking in the Member State. For instance, they are taken into account during national parliamentary debates as well as in court proceedings in high courts of justice, impacting on all migrants of those countries. Moreover, EMN supports the daily operational activities related to the management of migration flows in the EU.

The challenges that the EMN is currently facing. The constantly changing trends in migration and asylum, largely affected by societal events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, etc., require the EMN work and organisation to frequently adapt to new and emerging needs. One of the biggest challenges that the EMN recently faced was the shift to fully online meetings as a result of the lockdown in times of COVID, as well as the management of many people being in the EU territory with invalid visas though unable to return to their countries due to the pandemic.

The EMN budget. Pursuant to Council Decision 2008/381/EC, the Steering Board approves the minimum and maximum amount of the EMN budget to be allocated to EMN NCPs to finance EMN activities in accordance with the objectives set in the Work Programmes (Article 4). The budget is allocated to each NCP through a Direct Award process launched annually. The grant allocation procedure is fully digitalised and is managed by DG HOME. Generally, Member States ask for a co-financing rate of 80-85% of EMN budget to support EMN-related activities. The EMN budget is mostly spent to support the production of outputs, especially those based on desk research (e.g. EMN studies, informs, glossary). Issues of underspending have been observed for the period 2018-2021, mainly due to limited activities undertaken during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Areas of improvement. There should be higher alignment between the Commission and the NCPs, as well as among the NCPs, on what are the strategic and operational priorities in the field of migration and asylum. Also, shortcomings in the EMN implementation procedures

were highlighted, including the lack of sufficient expertise within the NCPs in terms of management of EU funds application procedures. It was also underlined that such expertise is not specifically requested by the Council Decision.

3.3 Targeted interviews

3.3.1 Effectiveness

Overall, it was confirmed that the EMN provided accessible, comparable, easily readable, objective, reliable and up-to-date information. Most NCPs interviewed during the study highlighted that the EMN provided updated information mainly through the regular publication of the ARMs and their statistical annexes, as well as through quarterly Bulletins. Objectivity and reliability of the EMN information were ensured through a multi-stakeholder and multi-agency approach to the data collection process, which included the involvement of the National Migration Networks. According to nine NCPs, three Steering Board members, two EU bodies and one academic, EMN products were relevant sources of information, as well as appropriate in terms of number and topics covered.

Moreover, as pointed out by one Steering Board member, four EU bodies and one CSO, the information provided by the EMN was used by EU-level stakeholders in various ways, including to assess and revise EU relevant initiatives (e.g. the Long-Term Residence Directive and the Temporary Protection Directive), as well as to streamline the data collection conducted by other relevant EU bodies.

The collaboration between the EMN and other EU bodies, CSOs and international organisations was generally positive.

Concerning the provision of information to the general public, nine NCPs and 11 Steering Board members highlighted that EMN products were properly disseminated within and beyond the EMN, through the EMN website and social media account. Moreover, the majority of consulted stakeholders agreed that EMN conferences and events contributed to disseminating EMN products, thanks to the budget specifically allocated to such activities.

3.3.2 Efficiency

According to 11 Steering Board members, the EMN budget was sufficient to implement the Network's activities, with costs being proportionate to the benefits obtained. Nevertheless, five Steering Board members complained that the funding awarded for unit costs foreseen for travelling and accommodation purposes was not sufficient.

EMN grant award procedures were seen as time-consuming. More precisely, as highlighted by 11 Steering Board members, such procedures were not timely, with funding, often times, not being available yet when the implementation of the activities foreseen by the Work Programmes started.

Also, two NCPs, three Steering Board members and one EU body highlighted that the Commission's role as chair of the Steering Board created some conflict of interest, in particular during the selection of topics to be covered by the EMN, when the Commission's priorities end up prevailing over those of the NCPs.

3.3.3 Coherence

The work conducted by the EMN was found to be consistent with the work conducted by other relevant EU agencies, as confirmed by two NCPs, six Steering Board members, all EU bodies, one international organisation and two CSOs.

3.3.4 EU added value

Through its direct support towards enhanced cooperation both within and beyond the EU, the EMN brought about remarkable added value, as highlighted by nine Steering Board members. Moreover, two NCPs, six Steering Board members and one academic highlighted that the permanent nature of the EMN facilitated cooperation and mutual trust among stakeholders involved in the field of migration and asylum, which were essential to retrieve data and provide comprehensive and reliable information.

Consulted stakeholders (eight NCPs, four Steering Board members, three EU bodies, all international organisations and two CSOs) agreed that if the EMN did not exist, the varied and structured information it produced would not have been in place, as there is no other EU network or organisation that offers the same quality of information.

EMN products, especially AHQs, ARMs, Informs, as well as the EMN Glossary, played a pivotal role towards the creation of a common understanding of key migration-related features among policymakers from different Member States, as highlighted by six NCPs, one Steering Board member, one EU body, two CSOs and one academic.

3.3.5 Relevance

Overall, it was confirmed that EMN products covered all the priority topics suggested by participants in the EMN meetings. Indeed, as highlighted by nine Steering Board members, topics were proposed by the Commission but need to be approved by a two-thirds majority of SB members.

Four NCPs and one EU body highlighted that EMN publication procedures were often too lengthy, which led to information being made available too late, affecting the Network's timeliness and relevance.

3.4 Case studies

3.4.1 Effectiveness

Overall, consulted stakeholders from all six Member States selected as case studies, agreed that the EMN, through its products and activities, supported EU and national policymaking in the field of migration and asylum. Among EMN products, AHQs were highlighted as extremely useful by stakeholders in four Member States. Nonetheless, in two Member States, some stakeholders noted that there was no direct link between the information produced by the EMN and national policies.

Concerning the provision of information to the general public, some stakeholders in two Member States highlighted that there was a lack of public awareness of the EMN, noting that dissemination efforts targeted at the general public should be enhanced.

3.4.2 Efficiency

Consulted stakeholders in five Member States agreed that the funding allocated for EMN products and activities was appropriate, while stakeholders in one Member State disagreed, stating that the funding they received was not sufficient to cover all expenses, preventing the organisation of events at the national level, as well as participation in other NCPs' events.

With regards to grant allocation procedures, stakeholders in four Member States complained that such procedures were lengthy and burdensome, with grants often being available only after the start of the activities envisaged by the Work Programmes.

3.4.3 Coherence

According to stakeholders from all six Member States, there was a high level of coherence between the policy areas covered by EMN products and national policy priorities and strategies in their respective countries.

Concerning consistency between the EMN and other EU agencies and initiatives, stakeholders from one Member State highlighted a degree of overlap between the activities of the EMN and those of EUAA, while stakeholders from another Member State highlighted a degree of overlap between the activities of the EMN and those of the EU Blueprint. This results in duplication of work for those involved with the EMN and other agencies and initiatives.

3.4.4 EU added value

Stakeholders from all six Member States agreed that the EMN, through its provision of timely, up-to-date, high quality and reliable information, brought remarkable added value. Moreover, stakeholders from four Member States highlighted that a key advantage of the EMN was the establishment of a formal, structured, and comprehensive platform for the provision of comparable information. Other identified advantages were the networking opportunities provided by EMN meetings and events (one Member State), facilitation of national policymaking (two Member States), quick access to information through AHQs (three Member States), cooperation and exchange of information and good practices among

Member States (four Member States), approximation of national approaches to migration and asylum (one Member State) and provision of public information (one Member State).

Even in cases where mechanisms exist to ensure the sustainability of the EMN's activities, the consulted stakeholders largely agreed that the above-mentioned advantages would disappear if the EMN were to be discontinued, and retrieving the same information provided by the EMN would be extremely costly and time-consuming (three Member States).

3.4.5 Relevance

The EMN's legal basis proved to be adequate to ensure the adaptability of the EMN to new and emerging challenges, as seen during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the EMN swiftly adapted the focus of its outputs to collect information and cover issues related to the pandemic (all Member States). Yet, according to consulted stakeholders from one Member State, the broad mandate of the EMN leads to the production of EMN outputs that are either too broad or too specific, consequently reducing their relevance to all Member States.

Moreover, consulted stakeholders from three Member States highlighted that the topics covered by the EMN matched the information needs of national policymakers in their respective countries. Interestingly, consulted stakeholders from one Member State, noted that national policymakers require information on the spot, which can be difficult to obtain from the EMN, due to the lengthy topic selection and publication procedures of EMN outputs. As a result, by the time EMN outputs are published, they are not as relevant. Yet, consulted stakeholders from the same Member State highlighted that the EMN's relevance resides in its contribution to improving cooperation among Member States and facilitating the exchange of expertise in the field of migration and asylum.

3.5 Workshop with NCP coordinators

Two NCPs that participated in the workshop, stressed the need to assess the way Work Programmes are developed, as they tend to be too ambitious, leading to some objectives (e.g. anticipate migration developments, prevent migration crisis and counter false narratives) not being achieved. Moreover, they noted that the Commission plays a pivotal role in designing the Work Programmes, which results in the Work Programmes mainly reflecting the Commission's priorities.

Moreover, three NCPs suggested that the EMN's limited contribution to anticipating migration developments, preventing migration crises, and exploiting new technologies for migration management should not be identified as an issue, as these are not part of the Network's mandate, though they were in the end included as specific objectives in the EMN's Work Programmes. In this regard, five NCPs highlighted that the Commission played a stronger role than that of the NCPs when it comes to outlining the objectives of the Work Programmes, leaving NCPs with not enough room to negotiate the objectives.

Concerning the identified issue on the moderate contribution made by the EMN to the dissemination of national good practices, two NCPs noted that this was not an issue, as EMN products included a section on good practices.

As for the issue related to the EMN's limited provision of comparable statistics, two NCPs agreed that the statistics needed for EMN outputs were based on the data collected through administrative procedures which vary across countries. In this regard, one NCP noted that as EUROSTAT already works with national statistics offices, including on data harmonisation.

As regards the issue of unit costs foreseen for travelling and accommodation purposes not being sufficient, four NCPs highlighted that the only possible solution to tackle this issue is to change the threshold of unit costs.

Three NCPs noted that it is essential to address the issue of grant allocation procedures being too lengthy, which is caused by understaffing in the Commission to regulate grant allocation procedures (one NCP) and by the excessive rigidity in the Commission hiring process (one NCP).

One NCP, who is also part of the EMN Communication and Dissemination Working Group (CDWG), noted that since 2018 there had been a lot of focus on improving the issues highlighted concerning the provision of information to the general public, and centrally produce material that could be adapted to national needs and disseminated to the general public. The same NCP further noted that at the national level the NCP's communication efforts are supported by a national private service provider. Three NCPs highlighted their use of Destination Europe to reach the general public from universities and be in close contact with all associations of teachers that deal with the topic of migration. Among the main issues hindering the provision of information to the general public, the following were identified: the excessive number of outputs to be provided, which prevented NCPs from properly focusing on dissemination efforts (two NCPs), internal constraints related to the fact that the NCP was part of the Ministry of Interior (MoI) and that all communication efforts had to go through the PR office of the Ministry (one NCP) and internal constraints related to hiring additional staff (three NCPs).

Five NCPs highlighted that overall, there is not enough room to make changes once modifications were made to the first draft of Work Programmes by the Commission. The process of drafting the Work Programmes was not a bottom-up process and NCPs were not as involved as the Commission.

Finally, an NCP stressed that the fact that lengthy process to launch and produce a Study affects the visibility of the EMN at the national level, and that this is partially caused by the fact that the EMN is a European Network and as such, requires several steps before finalising the approval of a topic or product.