



Rabat Process
Euro-African Dialogue
on Migration and Development

A Decade of Dialogue

*on Migration
and Development*

**10
years
of dialogue**



Project funded by the European Union



Project implemented by



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With the contribution of the Rabat Process partner countries and organisations.

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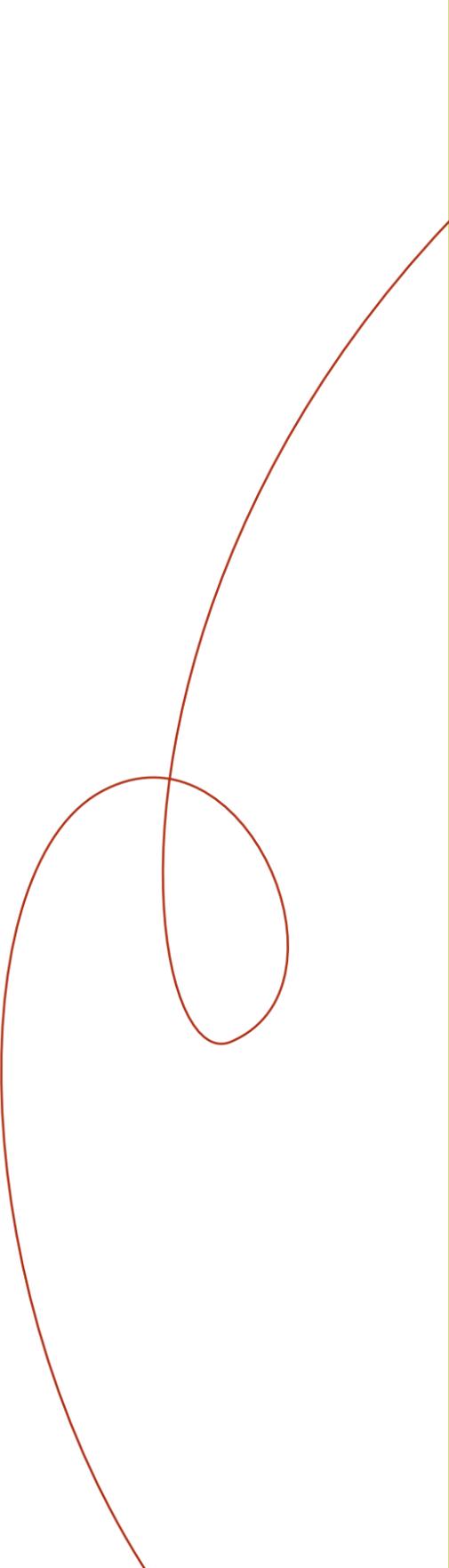
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Lessons learnt from a decade of dialogue

Acronyms

ACP

African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States

AECID

Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation

AMWCY

African Movement of Working Children and Youth

ANLTP

National Agency for the Fight against Trafficking in Persons

CAMM

Common Agenda on Migration and Mobility

CAMPO

Country of Origin Migrant Support Centre

CME

Council for Migrants Abroad

ECCAS

Economic Community of Central African States

EC

European Commission

ECOWAS

Economic Community of West African States

EU

European Union

FIAPP

International and Ibero-American Foundation for Administration and Public Policies

GAMM

Global Approach to Migration and Mobility

GFMD

Global Forum on Migration and Development

HCME

High Council for Migrants Abroad

ICMPD

International Centre for Migration Policy Development

ILO

International Labour Office

ISS

International Social Service

IOM

International Organization for Migration

MIDWA

Migration Dialogue for West Africa

MIEUX

Migration EU eXpertise

MMD

Support to Africa-EU Migration and Mobility Dialogue

MP

Mobility Partnership

SOM

Senior Officials Meeting

UN

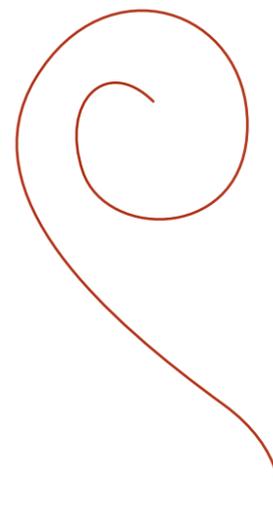
United Nations

UNHCR

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF

United Nations Children's Fund



Foreword

Ten years ago, sizeable migration flows to the Canary Islands as well as to Ceuta and Melilla have created a momentum that has led to the creation of the Euro-African Dialogue on Migration and Development (Rabat Process). The underlying idea was to create a platform that would allow a joint response to challenges caused by irregular migration flows and identify opportunities for cooperation. However, the Rabat Process quickly adopted a more comprehensive approach to migration issues that also included legal migration and, in particular, migration and development. This choice was one of the main reasons that contributed to the gradual creation of trust among the involved partners. Today, this high level of trust is one of the defining features of the Rabat Process and leads to a constructive dialogue. Participating countries have found a common language and approach migration issues openly. Of course, challenges in the area of migration remain, but the Rabat Process has been successful in creating a framework in which African and European States now discuss issues that would have been difficult to address in a spirit of partnership several years ago. Looking back over the past decade, it is clear that the Rabat Process has come a long way. This publication aims to shed light on the underlying factors of success which have contributed to creating the Rabat Process as it stands today. Among them are:

- » the 'migration route' approach;
- » a comprehensive and inclusive thematic focus;
- » the active engagement of the key actors.

However, as this publication shows, the dialogue is also confronted with challenges. One of these challenges is to preserve its flexibility in order to be able to remain a relevant framework in the fast-changing realm of migration. Recently, the dialogue has proven its capability to do so, in the context of the sizeable refugee and mixed migration flows in the Mediterranean. The reaction of the Rabat Process to this situation underlines its ability of adjusting to emerging issues. In 2014, the partner countries decided to make 'Promoting International Protection' the fourth pillar of the dialogue. A specialised meeting on Asylum and International Protection was already held in Morocco in June 2015. In this context, the Rabat Process Steering Committee has played a crucial role in setting new priorities in response to emerging issues, some of which are explored in this publication.

Finally, I would like to thank all colleagues and experts who have contributed to this publication. My special appreciation goes first and foremost to the partner countries and their Focal Points, as well as to the European Commission for their commitment to the Rabat Process and their availability to contribute to this publication. As Director of the Support Project, implemented by ICMPD and FIAPP, I would also like to thank the whole team for their tireless work in supporting this dialogue. Its work and achievements are highlighted in this anniversary publication. I hope you enjoy the read.

Lukas Gehrke
Director, Support Project

Introduction

The Euro-African Dialogue on Migration and Development (Rabat Process - www.processusderabat.net) is often cited as one of the most dynamic dialogues on migration between Europe and Africa. After a decade in existence, and at the dawn of a new phase in dialogues between the EU and Africa, the time has come to take a closer look at this initiative.

This publication aims to identify the lessons learnt from this experience which may be useful for other dialogues. It does not aim to present an exhaustive summary of the accomplishments of the Rabat Process.

This work is based on a series of interviews carried out between April and June 2015 among representatives from partner countries (members of the Steering Committee), members of the Support Project (ICMPD and FIIAPP) and European Commission (EC) officials who have supported this dialogue over several years. Different subjects were discussed in these interviews: the partnership between the countries of the Process, shared understanding of migration issues at national and regional levels, the evolution of priorities and operationalisation of the dialogue.

The first part of this publication presents the 'dialogue tool', which is the Rabat Process and its strategic priorities (1). The second part proposes analysis of a few key elements which make the Rabat Process an original dialogue (2). The next chapters open the path to reflection on the operationalisation of the dialogue through specific initiatives (3) and future challenges (4). Finally, the publication offers insights into the lessons learnt from a decade of dialogue.

Chapter 1

The dialogue at a glance

In 2006, the Euro-African dialogue on Migration and Development (Rabat Process) was founded based on the acknowledgement that finding a response to the increasing number of migrants wishing to cross the Straits of Gibraltar or to reach the Canary Islands, the gateway to Europe, was not exclusively the responsibility of Morocco and Spain. From this arose the need to link the **countries of origin, transit and destination** affected by the migration routes linking Central, West and Northern Africa with Europe.

A balancing point was sought between the countries which consider development to be a priority to reduce migration flows, and those which see the fight against irregular migration as a priority. In this context, **France, Morocco, Senegal and Spain** took the initiative to establish the Rabat Process.

Since 2006, this dialogue has brought together almost sixty European and African countries from North¹, West and Central Africa, as well as the EC and the Commission of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

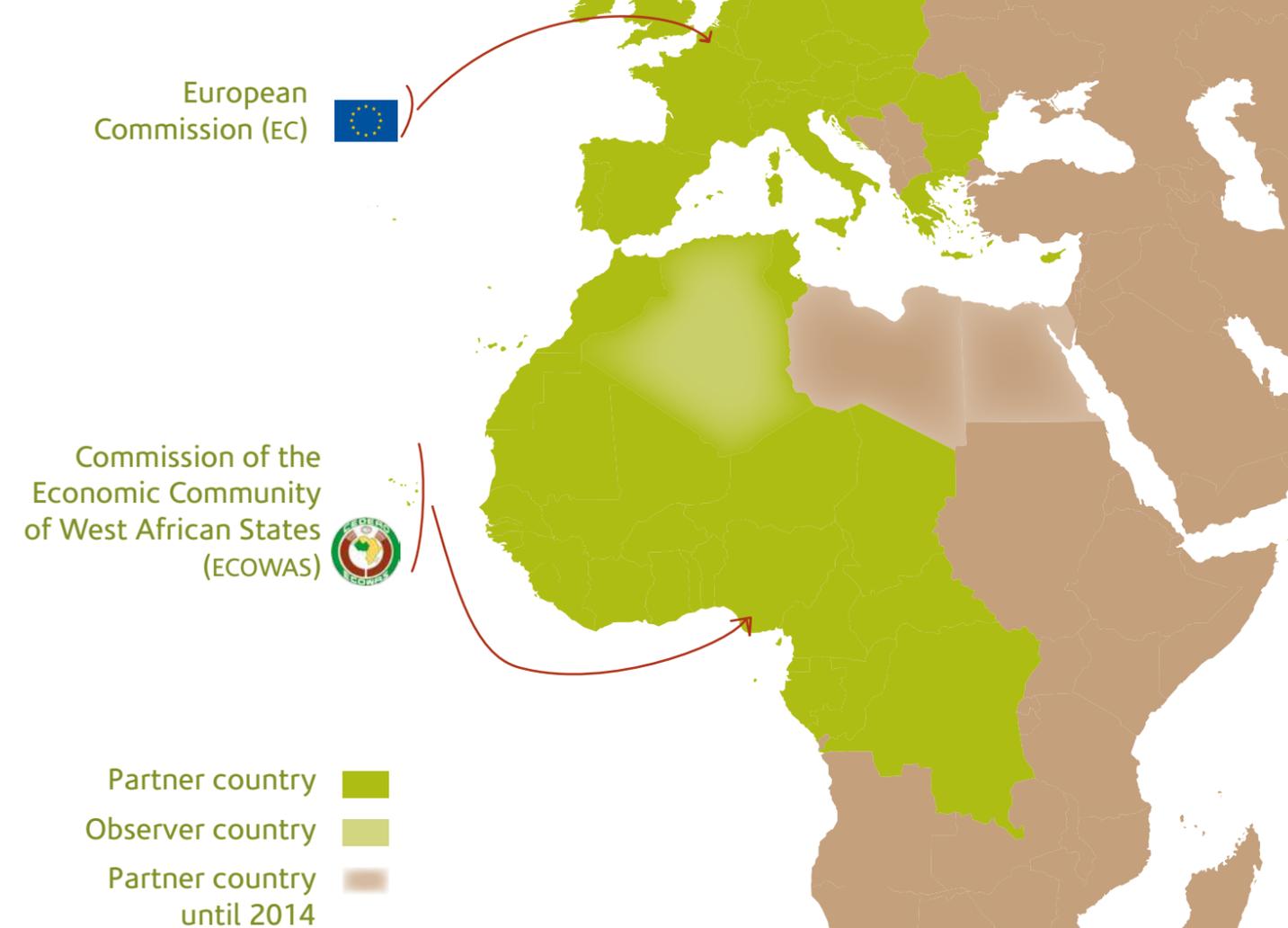
Other international organisations have observer status. The defining feature of this process is that it benefits from a **ministerial mandate** and combines several dimensions: political, technical and operational. This is not the case in all similar forums.

For a decade, the countries and partner organisations have been meeting regularly to discuss questions raised by the region's migratory challenges and to have a genuine dialogue. **Five principles**, defined by the Dakar Strategy (2011), translate the common wish of the partner countries to "approach migration issues in a balanced way, in the spirit of shared responsibility":

1. Working dialogue;
2. A flexible and balanced approach;
3. Coherent dialogue;
4. Committed partners;
5. Shared responsibility.

¹ > Algeria has observer status. Libya and Egypt do not participate actively in the dialogue anymore since the Ministerial Conference in 2014. However, the option to join the process again remains open to both countries.

MAP OF THE RABAT PROCESS REGION



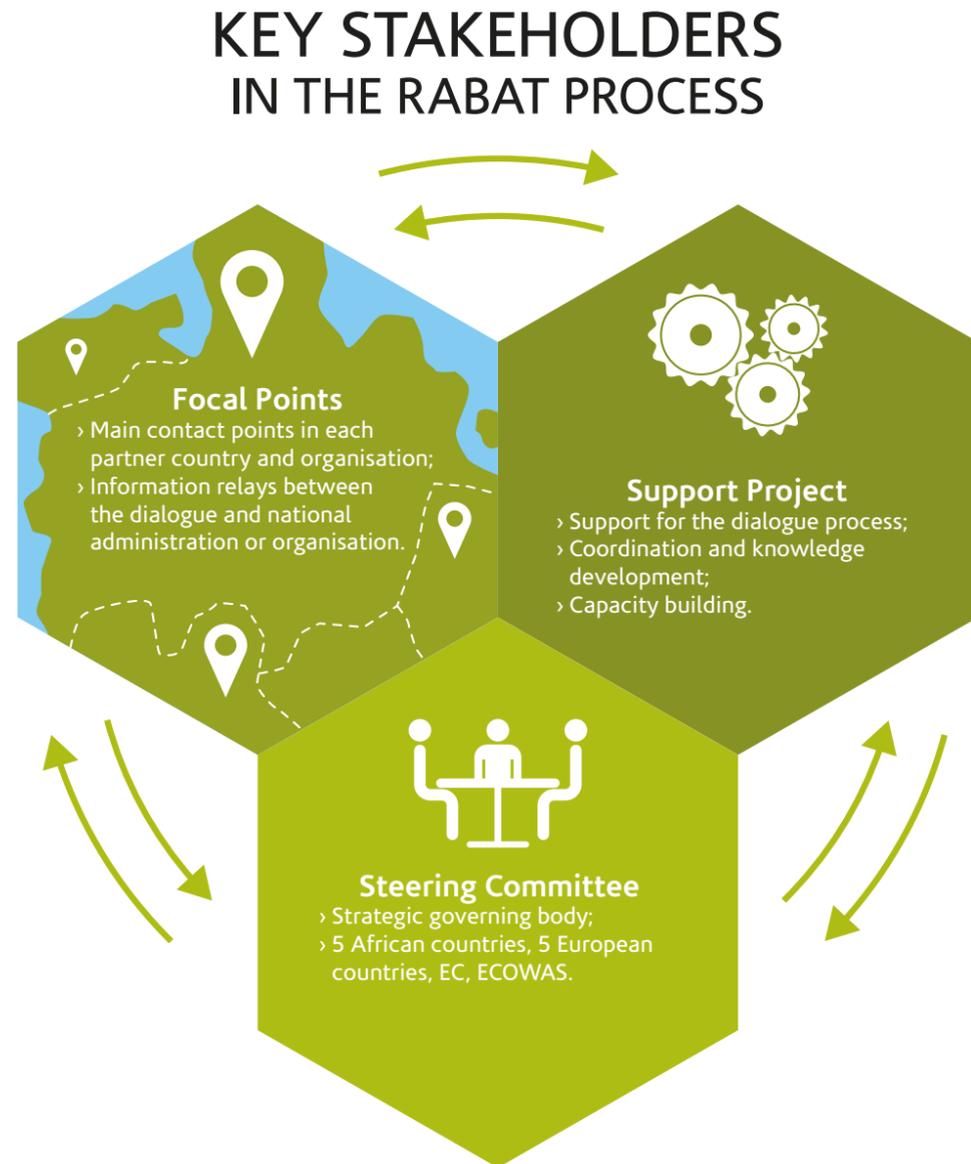
1.1 Key stakeholders in the Rabat Process

1.2 The meeting framework

1.3 The strategic framework

1.1 Key stakeholders in the Rabat Process

Three complementary stakeholders support the dynamics of the Rabat Process. A network of **Focal Points** animates the dialogue. The Focal Points for certain countries are part of the **Steering Committee** which defines the orientation of the Process and makes the decisions required to implement them. In parallel, the **Support Project** facilitates the dialogue on an operational level and implements capacity building activities with the partner countries.



Focal Points

Each partner country or organisation is represented by a Focal Point. For all matters related to the Rabat Process, this person is the relay between the dialogue itself and the national administration or organisation which it represents.

The role of a Focal Point

In the dialogue as such, the Focal Point:

- » **Participates** in Rabat Process meetings, where he/she represents his/her country/organisation and its strategic priorities;
- » **Shares** good practices and experiences of the country at meetings or via other communication channels within the Rabat Process;
- » **Can make requests** in the name of his/her country in order to allow the latter to benefit from short-term technical assistance.

At the national level, the Focal Point:

- » **Relays information** stemming from the Rabat Process, such as the strategic priorities resulting from conclusions of the dialogue meetings;
- » **Identifies specialists** within his/her administration who can participate in meetings on specific topics;
- » **Contributes to the implementation** of technical assistance in the Rabat Process, where applicable.

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is the **strategic governing body** of the Rabat Process. It comprises five African countries (Burkina Faso, Equatorial Guinea, Mali, Morocco and Senegal) and five European countries (Belgium, France, Italy, Portugal and Spain), as well as the EC and ECOWAS. The Steering Committee guides the dialogue according to its "Operating Modalities"² and the priorities established by the dialogue meetings for which all partner countries gather. Its role is to stimulate cooperation between the States, to prepare the **political orientation** of the dialogue and to follow up on the implementation of ministerial declarations.

² › A document which defines the operational methods and organisation of the Steering Committee.

³ › Between 2008 and 2010, the Support Project was implemented by FIIAPP with co-financing from the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID).

The Support Project

To support the dialogue, the Rabat Process also benefits from a **Support Project**, which has been renewed in a cyclical fashion since 2008. The fourth phase of the Support Project will start at the end of 2015. Each phase focuses on clear objectives via the implementation of specific activities.

The work of the Support Project

While the project has evolved throughout its different phases, its activities generally centre around three areas:

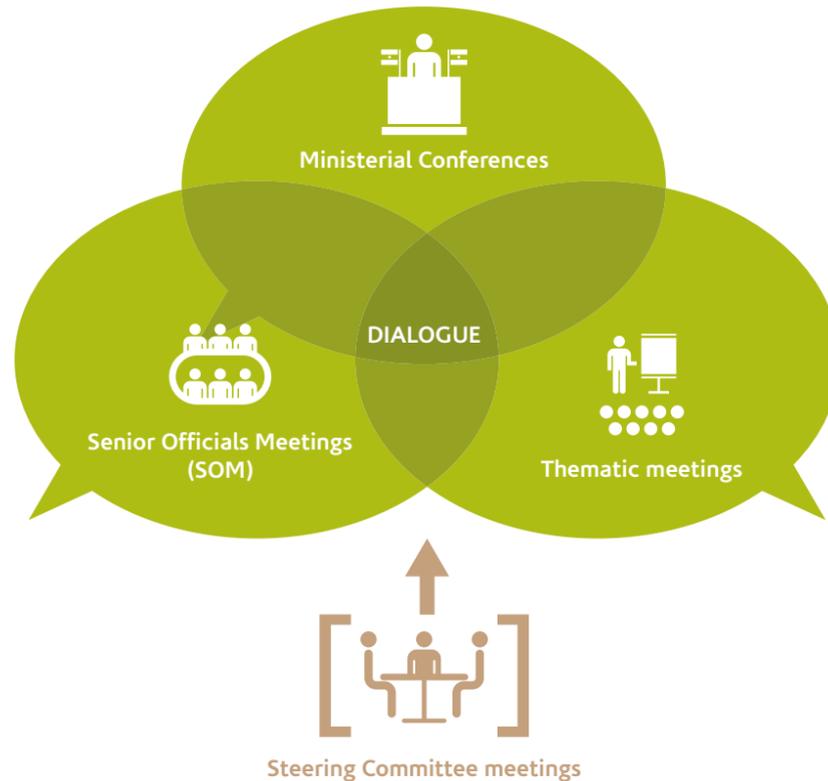
- » **Support to the dialogue** via the organisation of meetings and the development of communications tools;
- » **Coordination and development of knowledge** and good practices between the dialogue partners;
- » **Capacity building** for partner countries via the implementation of technical assistance.

The EC, the funding body, entrusts implementation of the Support Project to organisations in the area of migration. FIIAPP and ICMPD are the two organisations which, to date, have led the Support Project, in close cooperation with the members of the Steering Committee³, while occasionally benefiting from the expertise of other partner organisations.

1.2 The meeting framework

The Rabat Process aims to create a **consultation framework** based on three types of meetings: **Euro-African Ministerial Conferences** constitute the highest level of dialogue. They are preceded by **Senior Officials Meetings (SOM)**. **Thematic meetings** complete the structure. Each of these meetings plays a specific role in the dialogue.

THE 3 LEVELS OF DIALOGUE



Ministerial Conferences

Euro-African Ministerial Conferences on Migration and Development have taken place every three years in one of the Process's key countries. The **ministers in charge of migration and development** in the partner countries meet to adopt a statement, as well as a multi-annual cooperation programme.

Senior Officials Meetings

The SOM are the main fora for policy dialogue, where the dialogue partners debate strategic objectives in detail. These debates usually result in a preliminary draft of a political statement, to be adopted at the next ministerial conference. However, SOMs can also be organised outside the context of a ministerial conference, to address particularly important topics. The discussions which take place at a SOM are enriched by presentations of the partner countries' experiences and the results of the Support Project's activities. Each SOM is officially hosted by a country taking part in the dialogue.

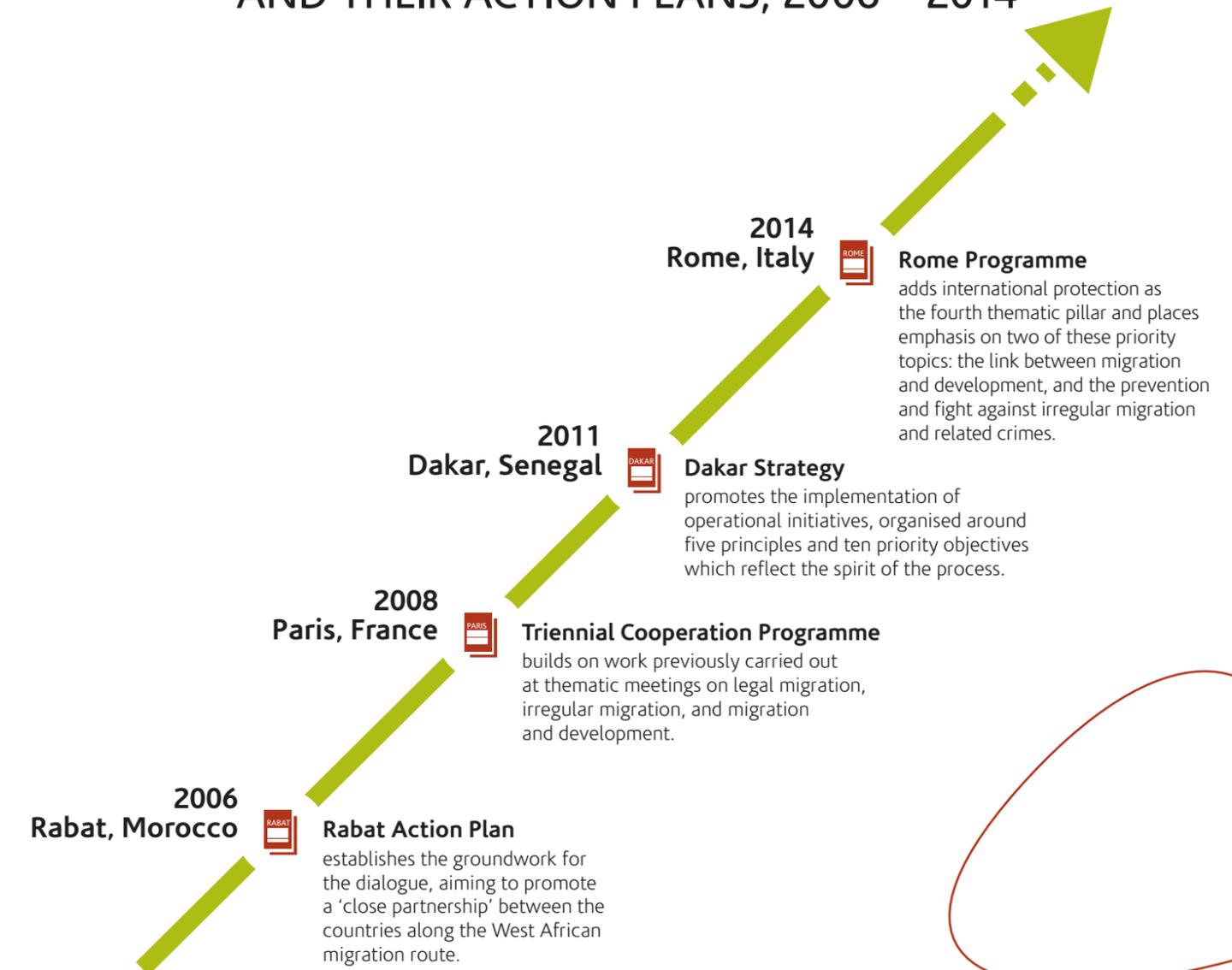
Thematic meetings

Thematic meetings are dedicated to a specific topic, which stems from the strategic framework and its priorities. They provide the dialogue partners with the opportunity to share their experiences and good practices. After each meeting, the conclusions of the co-chairs (consisting of one African and one European country) are presented to the participants. These conclusions propose specific recommendations for the future. Depending on the topic covered, the profile of the participants may vary from one meeting to another. The representative of each partner country and organisation is chosen by the Focal Points and their hierarchy. Representatives from the academic world and international (or non-governmental) organisations are often invited to share their expertise.

1.3 The strategic framework

The subjects debated at the above-mentioned dialogue meetings have evolved over time, always with an eye to the migratory context and strategic framework of the dialogue. The framework is defined by ministerial declarations and their action plans which determine the **main focus** of the dialogue, as well as its specific objectives. To date, four ministerial declarations have marked the Rabat Process.

THE MINISTERIAL DECLARATIONS AND THEIR ACTION PLANS, 2006 – 2014



Since the early days of the Rabat Process, three **complementary pillars** structure the dialogue by grouping its specific objectives around global themes. In 2014, a fourth pillar was established by the fourth Euro-

African Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development in Rome. The **Rome Programme** defined the new strategic framework for the period 2015-2017.

THE FOUR THEMATIC PILLARS OF THE ROME PROGRAMME



The evolution of strategic priorities

In pursuit of its strategic objectives, the Rabat Process follows a **global approach**, inspired by the EU's Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM). The partner countries have chosen to approach all of the challenges linked with migration, represented by the thematic pillars. However, it should be noted that all the thematic pillars and priorities which they cover have not evolved at the same pace since the dialogue was launched. Some of them incite more interest and debate than others. At the same time, a general coherence has been maintained and the overall approach, as well as the balance between the pillars, has never been called into question.

The **migration and development** pillar is one of the topics around which a consensus was established first. This question raises great interest among States because it refers to the root causes of migration.

The dialogue on **irregular migration** has generated more debate but has also progressed over the years. This is particularly linked to the migratory context which has evolved during the last decade. In parallel, the question of **border management**, which used to be a concern for Europe, is now a major concern for African countries themselves.

For all of the partner countries, border management has become a security challenge. Nonetheless, it is also an important element of development cooperation. In West Africa, good border management promotes the **free movement of people and goods**, according to the ECOWAS protocol of 1979.

The Rabat Process has always paid particular attention to these two pillars. Other topics, notably **legal migration**, have not created the same convergence of interests. Taking into account the current context, each ministerial declaration highlights a particular topic. In the area of legal migration, the Paris Triennial Cooperation Programme (2008) is probably the most ambitious. The Dakar Strategy (2011) recentred the debate on topics connected with development. Through the Rome Programme (2014), **international protection** has been raised to the level of a thematic pillar. In addition, two thematic priorities have been proposed: strengthening the link between migration and development, and the prevention and fight against irregular migration.

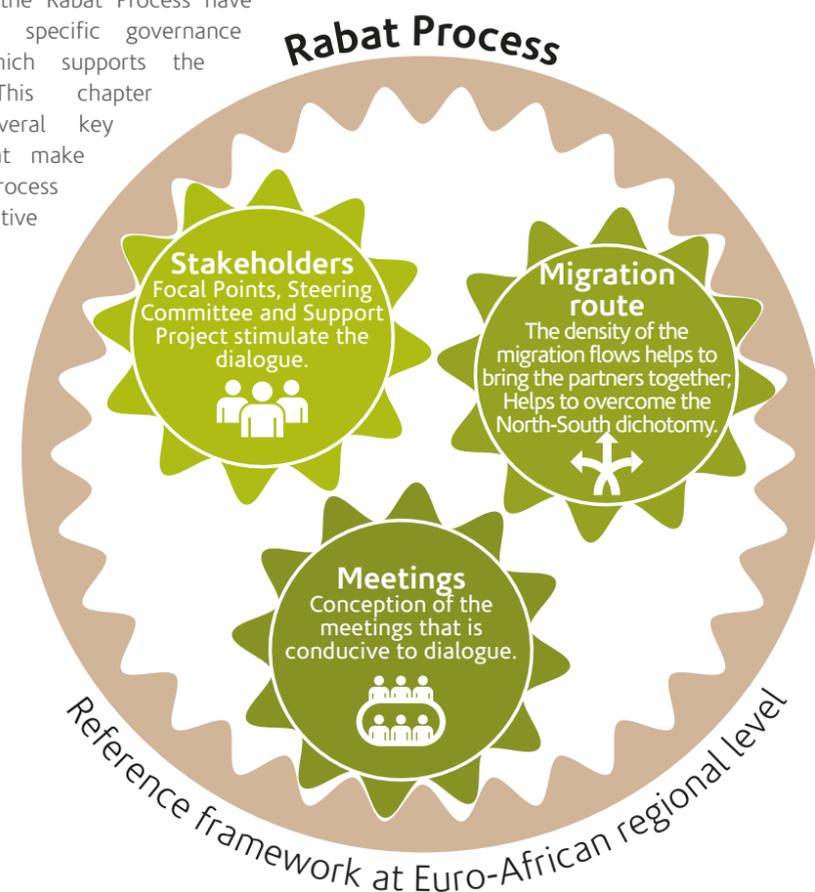
Nonetheless, each thematic pillar gives way to open discussions where sensitive issues are not hidden. This dynamism underlines the sincerity of the dialogue between the partner countries. What emerges from these debates is a **shared understanding**. This is one of the progressively acquired accomplishments of the Rabat Process.



The characteristics of a resourceful dialogue

Founded on a new and comprehensive vision of migration issues, the Rabat Process opens the way for concerted and balanced migration management, in the spirit of shared responsibility. To strengthen their cooperation, the partner countries of the Rabat Process have developed a specific governance structure which supports the dialogue. This chapter analyses several key elements that make the Rabat Process an innovative dialogue.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF A DIALOGUE TOOL



2.1 A dialogue stimulated by dynamic stakeholders

2.2 The 'migration route' – a key concept of the process

2.3 A Euro-African balance stimulated by political and thematic meetings

2.4 A reference framework at Euro-African level

2.1 A dialogue stimulated by dynamic stakeholders

A dialogue can only be successful with stakeholders who support the structure which has been established. Each one contributes in its own way to the success of the dialogue.

The **Focal Points** form a **network** which anchors the process in reality. Moreover, they guarantee the **continuity** of the actions and support the commitment of each State.

The **Steering Committee** is the key element in the management of the process. It constitutes a **favourable framework** for discussions and negotiations.

In parallel, the expertise supplied by the **Support Project** contributes both to the dialogue and its **operational implementation**. The capacity building activities and tools proposed by the Support Project constitute a source of inspiration for the partner countries.

AT A GLANCE



2.2 The 'migration route' – a key concept of the process

In the context of the Rabat Process, dialogue is closely linked with the concept of the 'migration route'. From the beginning, the logic of the migration route was a fundamental element which contributed to bringing together the partners of the dialogue.

The migration routes in the Rabat Process region combine migratory movements which are closely connected with the evolution of the **regional environment** and the evolution of migration management by the partner countries. For instance, the efficient cooperation between several partner countries of the dialogue has practically dismantled the irregular migration route towards the Canary Islands. Furthermore, political and economic crises, such as the crisis in Libya, affect migration flows and routes in the region. The main African host countries are not spared, and the principal emigration countries are even more affected. This leads to a continually increasing number of migrants.

All these changes lead to new migration trends, such as:

- » **The reorientation** of migration flows;
- » **Diversification** of migrants' profiles;
- » **The evolution** of the roles traditionally assumed by a country.

In this context, the concept of migration routes offers States an opportunity to overcome potential opposition in order to strengthen their cooperation in the management of migration along a single shared route. Since the start of the Rabat Process in 2006, this concept has strengthened the partner countries' backing of the dialogue. The process therefore moved away from a dialectic between European and African countries. It **brought together the countries** situated along a single migration route, and has succeeded in establishing a dialogue between them all, including with those who were previously rarely in contact. This choice of building a dialogue around migration routes represents a major change: the clear distinction between **countries of origin, transit and destination** is less and less applicable to contemporary migratory dynamics. Today, each country has alternatively or simultaneously one role or another, as African migrants, failing to reach their planned destination in Europe, settle down more and more durably, or are often blocked for a long time, in countries that have become new transit zones.

- » **Senegal**, historically a country of immigration, became a country of emigration and is now established as a transit country;

- » **Mali**, traditionally a country of emigration and immigration, is now also a key transit country on the migratory routes between the Sahel and Sahara;
- » **Morocco** is a country of emigration and transit, where migrants settle down more and more permanently;
- » **Niger**, traditionally a country of emigration, has become the key country of transit on the West African migration route towards North Africa and Europe.

MIGRATORY DYNAMICS IN THE AFRICAN RABAT PROCESS REGION⁴

The **current dynamics** reflect an important evolution of the migratory context. Today, African nationals from the Rabat Process region migrate in equal shares (or almost) to Africa and Europe. Between 2000 and 2013, the number of African nationals having emigrated to European countries increased by 60%. However, it must be noted that even if Europe remains the main destination outside Africa, most Africans migrate within their continent. For example, in West Africa in the same timeframe, 90% of emigration was oriented towards another country in the region.

West Africa is the region of Africa with the greatest density of intra-regional movement and the largest opening to other regions of Sub-Saharan Africa. There are countries which have long maintained close migratory links (Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire; Ghana and Togo) but new links also emerge between certain countries, notably between Mali and Nigeria.

North Africa is distinguished by its openness towards Europe: more than nine out of ten emigrants from that region move to the EU. Moreover, it can be seen that, for several years, exchanges between North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa have become more dense and complex⁵.

The migratory system in **Central Africa** follows an entirely different logic. Most of the intra- or extra-regional flows are essentially oriented towards the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In addition, the Republic of the Congo (Congo-Brazzaville) and Chad are also gaining ground as significant host countries.

⁴ The figures used for this analysis stem from the most recent database available for all Rabat Process countries: Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by Destination and Origin. United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Revision 2013. United Nations, Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, <http://esa.un.org/MigOrigin>.

⁵ Robin (N.), 2014. Migrations, observatoire et droit. Complexité du système migratoire ouest-africain. Migrants et normes juridiques, HDR. Université de Poitiers (30/09/2014), <http://tel.archives-ouvertes.fr/tel-01071279>.

The dialogue promotes synergies around common challenges, and enables the countries involved to share their knowledge and skills with each other in order to resolve shared difficulties. The **convergence of interests** between countries located along the same migration route

promotes dialogue which is more closely rooted in regional realities. Today, it is a matter of preserving this dynamic to promote the partners' commitment and ensure continuous relevance of the dialogue.



2.3 A Euro-African balance stimulated by political and thematic meetings

Faced with the evolution of migratory dynamics, the very organisation of the dialogue is critical. In the context of the Rabat Process, it is founded on a series of complementary meeting formats backed by the dynamism of the stakeholders.

The frequency of SOMs and ministerial conferences is part of the renewal of partner country political commitment, even if some of them are still more involved than others. These meetings allow the maintaining of a **shared understanding** of migratory matters, with a consensual approach to new challenges.

The **thematic meetings** enrich the political process. Not only does the location for each meeting alternate between Africa and Europe, but the

organisers also ensure a balance between the African and European speakers when setting the agendas. This **geographical balance** constitutes one of the defining features of the Rabat Process and one of its strengths. However, the countries' involvement still largely depends on the way in which the topic is perceived at national level, and whether or not it is a national priority.

After a decade, the dialogue has reached a certain level of maturity, and is at a key moment in its history. Maintaining political and thematic meetings with regularity is essential to guarantee the fluidity of discussions and exchange.



2.4 A reference framework at Euro-African level

The non-binding and voluntary character of the Rabat Process promotes fruitful and open discussion. This particular dynamic partly explains why the partners are so attached to it.

Cooperation between the EU and African countries does of course predate the Rabat Process, but the latter is among the first international dialogues to approach migration issues and development in a **balanced way**. This dual approach bears witness to a new vision of migration, and it is also one of the main challenges that the process must face. After ten years, this dialogue has reached political maturity, based on **shared language** and **consensual understanding** of the phenomena. For numerous partners, these political achievements must now translate into concrete actions. This is one of the challenges for the years to come. The Rome Programme (2015-2017) exists to strengthen this phase of operational implementation.

Everyone recognises the **complementarity** of the Rabat Process with other dialogue forums, and its less abstract character which is more in line with the migratory environment. Indeed, the partner countries are affected by the same migratory challenges. This defining feature constitutes real added value, and promotes the convergence of interests. In parallel, the identification of new priorities in a context of calm discussion guarantees the continued **relevance** of the dialogue. This global approach reconciles flexibility and continuity; it is one of the strengths and original features of the process.

For all these reasons, several members of the Steering Committee consider the Rabat Process a model which deserves to be replicated in other regions. In 2014, it indeed inspired the **Khartoum Process** which brought together the EU Member States and countries of North- East and East Africa, with Norway and Switzerland joining more recently.

It is difficult to assess the influence of the Rabat Process on the international front. Nonetheless, certain Focal Points of the Rabat Process mention a reciprocal relationship. According to them, **the international agenda** influences the dialogue, and vice versa.

Since the launch of the Rabat Process, the number of dialogues and fora dedicated to the issue of migration has significantly increased. The partner countries of the Rabat Process also participate in other dialogues, including the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), Euromed Migration and the ACP-EU dialogue⁶. In this context, several members of the Steering Committee have highlighted that, within the Rabat Process, they have **acquired skills** and

a language which have been useful to them in other settings. The sharing of methods to collaborate and reflect on migration issues appears to strengthen the quality of the dialogue and its impact on other national or international processes.

There is a common thread that links the Rabat Process and the Khartoum Process, which is the commitment of African and European countries to a political programme that prioritises migration.

Paolo Gentiloni, Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, at the Ministerial Conference for the launch of the Khartoum Process in November 2014.

AT A GLANCE



⁶ > ACP (African, Caribbean, and Pacific Group of States) and EU dialogue on migration.



Chapter 3

Operationalisation as a vital measure

The operationalisation of the dialogue corresponds to the wish to add a more concrete aspect to the process through the **implementation of specific initiatives**. Since the dialogue was launched, specific objectives have been set by the action plans of the ministerial declarations. The partner countries commit to being guided by these objectives when implementing their national initiatives.

The two years that followed the founding of the dialogue remained essentially at high political level, with few occasions to exchange on a more technical level. The States were definitely committed and willing, but it appeared increasingly apparent that, through the organisation of technical meetings, **operational and technical** support would have to be implemented to stimulate the dialogue. As a consequence, the first Support Project was launched in 2008.

The first two phases of the Rabat Process thus facilitated the establishment of a stable framework, allowing for sustainable and balanced intergovernmental dialogue. Since then, the operationalisation of the dialogue has evolved and widened progressively.

The third phase, governed by the Dakar Strategy (2011), went one step further. It insisted on the importance of carrying out **specific actions**, and introduced technical assistance activities, implemented by the Support Project. Today,

the Rome Programme “[...] continues efforts that have already been initiated and improves governance and implementation of the dialogue to give it new impetus and intensify the work started in the third phase.”⁷

In this context, it is important to remember that the operational implementation of the Rabat Process takes several forms. Two main strands can be distinguished:

- » The activities of the Support Project;
- » The initiatives undertaken in the spirit of the Rabat Process, but not resulting directly therefrom.

These two approaches have the same objective: to orient the dialogue towards action.

⁷ > The Rome Programme, p.11.

3.1 A Support Project to implement concrete actions

The Support Project was established to facilitate the dialogue, and support operational implementation through capacity building activities. Progressively, new steps were taken and new activities were introduced.

The activities of the Support Project strengthen adherence of the partner countries to the dialogue. Bonds are created and may result in specific cooperation in terms of knowledge sharing and training, as well as regards the funding of initiatives.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE SUPPORT PROJECT

The new phase of the Support Project, which starts in 2015, focuses on operational implementation with increased funding for technical assistance, thanks to the creation of a 'Facility' which includes two components. On the one hand, the implementation of specific meeting conclusions may be supported through short-term technical assistance at the request of partner countries. On the other hand, for the first time in the Rabat Process, there will be funding for bigger flagship initiatives

PHASE 4
2015–2018



The largest step towards operational implementation was taken during this phase, with the aim of supporting implementation of the Dakar Strategy. For the first time, the Support Project carried out capacity building activities in the form of short-term technical assistance upon request of the partner countries (for instance, training sessions). In parallel, the knowledge building activities and the sharing of good practices were diversified, i.e. through the development of tools such as Guides on the Use of Migration Data with several beneficiary countries

PHASE 3
2013–2015



PHASE 2
2010–2012



The first communication tools were developed with the objective of supporting information sharing and improved coordination between the partner countries. In this context, a mapping of initiatives implemented in the region of the Rabat Process was initiated, and the 'Rabat Review', a periodic newsletter, was launched.

PHASE 1
2008–2010



The activities essentially consisted of support for the organisation of meetings. The technical side of the thematic meetings (seminars and training) was added to the political level formed by the SOMs and ministerial conferences. In parallel, the network of Focal Points was initiated.

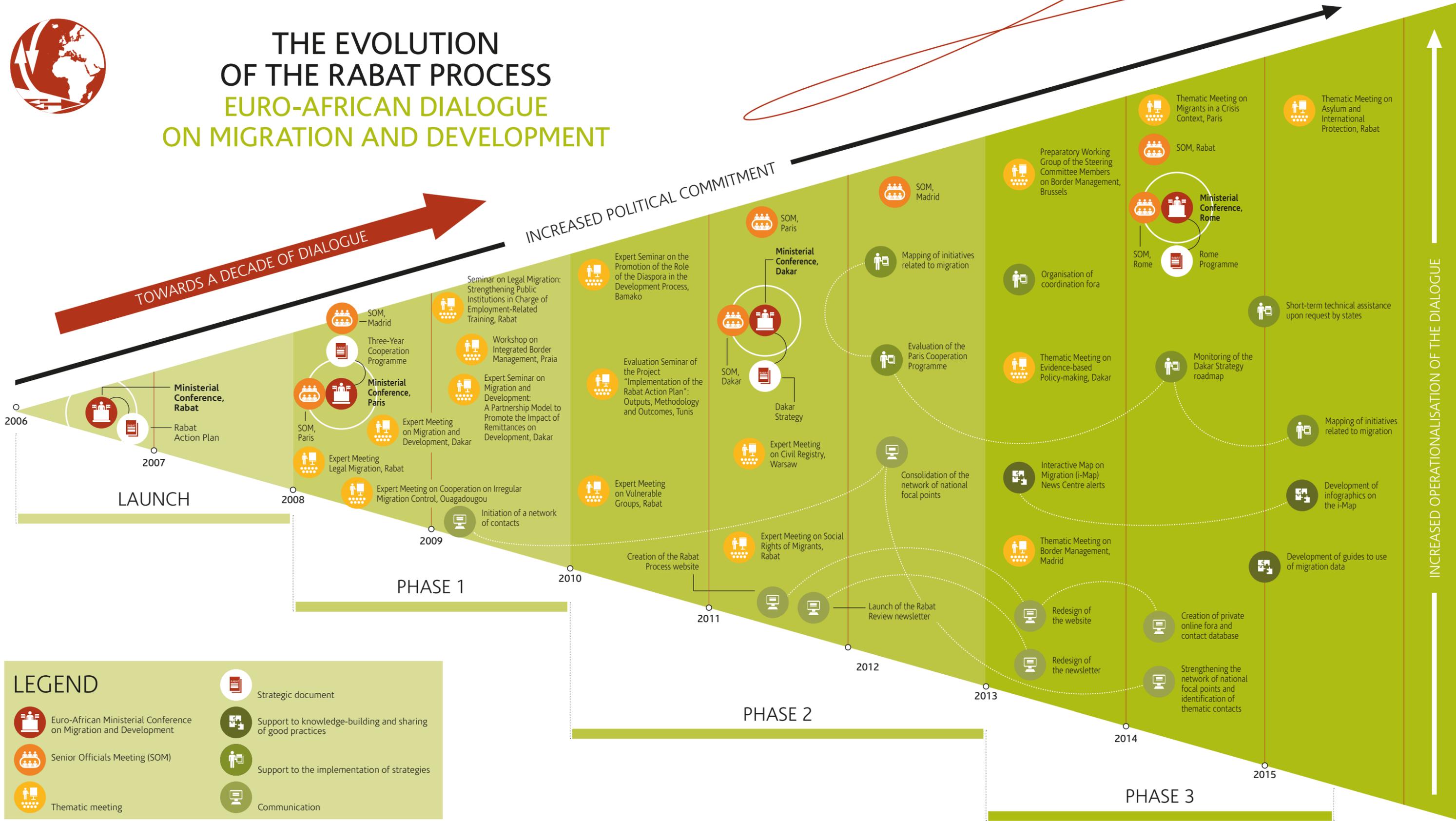
3.1 A Support Project to implement concrete actions

3.2 Initiatives established in the spirit of the Rabat Process



THE EVOLUTION OF THE RABAT PROCESS

EURO-AFRICAN DIALOGUE ON MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT



LEGEND

- Strategic document
- Euro-African Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development
- Senior Officials Meeting (SOM)
- Thematic meeting
- Support to knowledge-building and sharing of good practices
- Support to the implementation of strategies
- Communication

1,13 billion people live in the dialogue region

Initiated by France, Morocco and Spain, today the Process is led by a steering committee composed of Belgium, Burkina Faso, Equatorial Guinea, France, Italy, Mali, Morocco, Portugal, Senegal and Spain, as well as the EC and the ECOWAS Commission.



64
On average, 64 participants at thematic meetings of the 3rd phase of the Rabat Process

3.2 Initiatives established in the spirit of the Rabat Process

The operationalisation of the Rabat Process goes beyond the activities implemented with the funding and expertise of the Support Project. It also materialises through national and regional initiatives.

Since 2006, several countries have **launched projects** at bilateral or national levels, with the aim of improving migration management and promoting mobility. Their creation has benefited from the debates held within the Rabat Process. The exchange of good practices within the dialogue promotes the reproduction of technical and political initiatives in other national or regional contexts. Today, new migration policies, Mobility Partnerships (MPs) and technical assistance projects, to state just a few examples, have been put in place in the region.

New migration policies and initiatives

Numerous countries in the Rabat Process have developed or are in the process of developing their own migration policies. Among them, three initiatives are presented as examples below.

Morocco's new policy on migration issues

Conscious of the evolution of migratory realities within its territory, and keen to promote national policy respecting the rights of migrants, Morocco launched an initiative in 2013 to upgrade its legal and institutional framework related to **immigration, asylum and the fight against trafficking**. In this way, the King of Morocco invited his government to "design a new global policy relating to matters of immigration and asylum, following a humanitarian approach in compliance with the international commitments of Morocco, and respecting immigrants' rights".⁸ In parallel, a department in charge of Migration Affairs was created and entrusted to the Ministry of Moroccans Living Abroad. Concurrently, measures to regulate foreigners residing without authorisation in Morocco were adopted.

New legislation against human trafficking and the smuggling of migrants in Niger

In 2010, Niger adopted a new law⁹ establishing human trafficking as a crime against humans, with heavy penalties for those found guilty. It was inspired by the UN convention of 2000 and the Palermo Protocol on human trafficking. Moreover, an operational structure for the execution and implementation of strategies and national policies against human trafficking in Niger, **the National Agency for the Fight against Trafficking in Persons** (ANLTP), was created. Its mission is to raise awareness, provide information and look after victims of trafficking or smuggling, to support and train key stakeholders (magistrates, defence and security forces, and civil society), as well as to gather data and information on human trafficking. In addition, and in response to the increasing security and humanitarian concerns in the region, Niger adopted a law against migrant smuggling in 2015.

Mobilisation of the Malian diaspora

Since January 2012, Mali has been confronted with the worst crisis in its history. Faced with this dramatic situation, the Malian diaspora has been able to mobilise and provide substantial contributions, not only in material and financial terms, but also moral and intellectual resources. The Malian diaspora is represented in sixty four countries across the world, and each of these countries hosts a **Council of Malians Abroad** (CME) which emanates from different associations. Together with the support of the relevant ministerial departments, the High Council of Malians Abroad (HCME), recognised as a public utility by the Government of Mali, coordinated the delivery of emergency humanitarian aid from the diaspora to the beneficiaries. This organisational tool has been crucial in mobilising the help of the diaspora. Mali has thus acquired experience which it was able to share with other partner countries at the Thematic Meeting on Migrants in Times of Crisis, organised by the Rabat Process in Paris, in April 2014.

8 › Royal address at the occasion of the 38th anniversary of the Marche Verte (Green March), 6 November 2013.

9 › Ruling no. 2010-86 of 16 December 2010.



Mobility Partnerships and Common Agendas for Migration and Mobility

Amid the initiatives in the region, the MPs and the Common Agenda on Migration and Mobility (CAMM) deserve particular attention. The MPs and CAMM bring together stakeholders who are also involved in the Rabat Process and who benefit from a new environment more conducive and open to dialogue. The Rabat Process and the MPs are mutually supportive and produce complementary results.

The MPs and CAMM are legally unbinding **political declarations** with an operational arm. As such, they constitute a flexible framework for the correct management of migration between the EU and a third party country. In the region of the Rabat Process, MPs have been established with Cabo Verde, Morocco and Tunisia, and a CAMM was signed with Nigeria in 2015.

Both MPs and CAMM promote the implementation of specific initiatives, such as the development of new migration policies, twinning and capacity building within national administrations. The MPs also foresee negotiations between the partner countries regarding **visa facilitation and readmission agreements**. The first visa facilitation and readmission agreements entered into force on 1 December 2014 between the EU and Cabo Verde.

Technical projects in the region

To improve migration management, a high number of technical projects have been established in the African partner countries of the Rabat Process. These initiatives often tackle thematic priorities of the dialogue, even though they do not result directly from the latter. The exact number of these projects is difficult to evaluate. A **non-exhaustive inventory** created by the Support Project listed more than **340 projects** between 2012 and 2015.

In this context, regional projects which involve several partner countries merit particular attention. Their launch benefited from a new environment more conducive to cooperation. The Rabat Process undoubtedly contributed to this evolution, creating new links between countries which previously held very little discussion on matters of migration. By way of an example, some of these projects are presented below, in order to demonstrate the wide variety of initiatives in place.

The Migration EU eXpertise (MIEUX) initiative

The Migration EU eXpertise (**MIEUX**) initiative, developed jointly by the EU and ICMPD since 2009, is an example of a capacity development tool based on the demand of each beneficiary country.¹⁰ MIEUX offers a peer-to-peer transfer of expertise and **tailored technical assistance** by deploying experts on migration who come mainly from administrations within the EU Member States. Where necessary, experts from non-members of the EU are also deployed, applying the 'triangular peer-to-peer cooperation' approach ('EU-South-South'). According to the thematic pillars of the GAMM, MIEUX incorporates every thematic area of migration. In this spirit, and through various regional activities, MIEUX also supports the partner countries of the Rabat Process. The project thus helps to promote cooperation and regional dialogue in the field of migration.

¹⁰ > Project funded by the EU.

A guide for the reintegration of Senegalese migrant workers from Spain

Considering the Senegalese diaspora as a great lever for development, the International Labour Office (ILO) created a 'Guide for the reintegration of Senegalese migrant workers from Spain' (2011).¹¹ This **tool box** contains two sections:

- » One provides information on **living conditions and work** in the country of destination. More specifically, it advises on the rights and duties of a migrant worker in Spain, with guidance, and legal and practical information (employment contract, minimum wage, leave, visa, health, social security);
- » The other presents the **conditions for reintegration, and economic and professional** reinsertion in Senegal (methodology to create a business or cooperative, specific features of migrant entrepreneurship, financing, focus on certain sectors such as fishing, agriculture, livestock farming, artisan industries).

This guide aims to facilitate legal migration between countries of origin and destination, with the safety and benefit of both the migrants and their countries of origin and destination in mind.

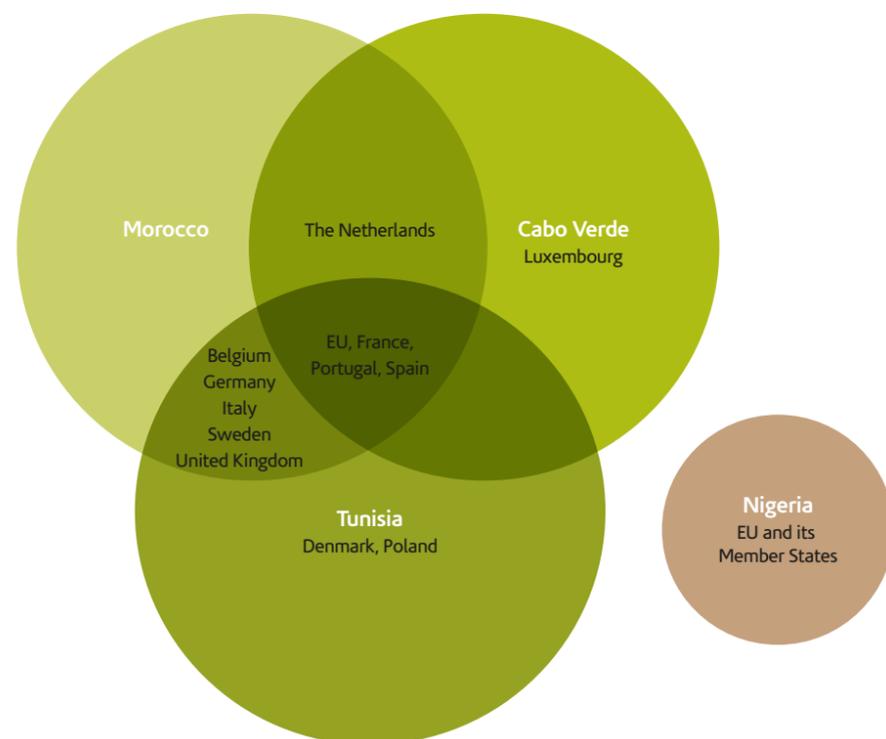
The regional platform on the mobility of children and young people in Western and Central Africa

The protection of isolated or unaccompanied migrant minors is the origin of a regional project on the mobility of **children and young people** in Western and Central Africa, initiated by a broad platform of child protection agencies. In this context, it has been possible to establish a collective thought process on the protection of minors on the move, by building on the experience gained in Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea and Togo. The analysis demonstrates that the core of the problem is not mobility itself, but the **extreme vulnerability** of children engaged in mobility. Based on this observation, joint actions focusing on advocacy and operational implementation were developed in different countries within the Rabat Process between 2011 and 2015.

¹¹ > Project funded by the Spanish Ministry of Labour and Immigration.

¹² > The platform is essentially funded by Terre des Hommes (Lausanne), Save the Children (Sweden), UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), ILO, IOM (International Organization for Migration) and ISS (International Social Service). The organisations Enda Jeunesse-Action, Plan International and AMWCY (African Movement of Working Children and Youth) are also closely involved in the platform. The EU is one of the funding partners of certain actions implemented by partner organisations of the platform.

SIGNATORIES OF MPS AND CAMM IN THE RABAT PROCESS REGION



Chapter 4

The future challenges of the Rabat Process

Since it has accomplished significant achievements, the experiences of the Rabat Process arouse great interest, but there are still many challenges to overcome. To this end, the Rabat

Process must maintain its **inclusive character** and remain attentive to the evolution of the migratory context.

4.1 A dialogue between continuity and flexibility

As a dialogue focusing on migration, it is critical for the Rabat Process to maintain a certain **flexibility**. The continuing relevance of the dialogue depends indeed directly on its ability to adapt to new situations, created by the evolution of the migratory context, and to explore emerging topics. The challenge is also to preserve a **balanced approach** to the management of Intra-African and Euro-African migratory flows.

The priorities of the Rabat Process and the subjects debated at the dialogue meetings have evolved over time, always in relation to the migratory context. However, it must be noted that it is still a significant challenge for the dialogue to maintain a balance between continuity and the introduction of new subjects and priorities. It seems therefore unavoidable to promote the flexibility of the dialogue in order to guarantee the longevity of its framework.

At first sight, the strategic context of the dialogue appears to be somewhat rigid: new ministerial statements are indeed only adopted

approximately every three years. However, to date, the Rabat Process has been successful in introducing a certain flexibility by using **complementary tools**.

First of all, the Steering Committee, which meets several times a year, can make way for discussions on emerging priorities within the dialogue. The Steering Committee can therefore adapt to new situations relatively quickly.

The orientations set by the **Steering Committee** are often translated into thematic meetings: these meetings animate the cycle between two ministerial conferences. They are part of the global strategic context, but provide an opportunity to highlight current questions. Finally, the capacity building activities launched by the **Support Project** also allow for a certain flexibility. They take into account specific priorities of the beneficiary countries which result from the particular local context.

In general terms, the Rabat Process has been able **to combine continuity and flexibility** over the years. An example of this combination

is the decision of the partner countries to promote **'international protection'** as one of the thematic pillars of the Rabat Process in 2014. A Thematic Meeting on Asylum and International Protection was organised in June 2015.

The impact of crises on the region of the Rabat Process

The future of the Rabat Process is closely connected with the context created by the routes and migration flows crossing through the countries in the region participating in the dialogue. At the outset of the Rabat Process, the flow of migrants travelling in fishing boats to the Canary Islands was the subject of debate. Today, following the effective cooperation which practically dismantled irregular migration networks on this migration route, other routes and flows attract the attention of the dialogue.

The **situation in the central Mediterranean** area continues to pose a major challenge for the Rabat Process region and beyond its borders. Furthermore, **the impact of other recent crises**, which have affected the Rabat Process region, must be taken into account; and there are multiple crises of this genre (armed conflict in the Central African Republic and in Mali, the Arab Spring, terrorist acts by Boko Haram, etc.).

In North Africa, the **crisis in Libya** has fundamentally changed the context in which migration flows are driven. The majority of departures from North Africa towards Europe, which often use ill-equipped and overloaded boats, set off from the **Libyan coast**. Since the record rate of departures was documented in 2014, it has only continued to grow. In parallel, a 43% increase in **asylum applications** was recorded in the EU for the period 2013-2014.¹³ This trend, which became more pronounced in 2015, is closely linked to the situation in Syria and Iraq, but also to the situation in the countries situated along the EU-Horn of Africa route which neighbour the Rabat Process region.

Finally, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that, on the African continent, five of the first ten **host countries of refugees** form part of the Rabat Process (2013).¹⁴ As such, the data for each asylum country reveals a significant increase in the number of refugees since 2011, which may even exceed 250% in West Africa (particularly in

Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Niger). In 2013, Chad (430,000 refugees) remained the most important host country for African refugees originating from a country within the Rabat Process. It also exceeded Cameroon.

This also bears witness to the impact on the dialogue of recent crises. The dialogue must adapt to the new context created by these events. However, the objective of the Rabat Process cannot be to intervene in emergencies and to respond to each crisis. The dialogue process prioritises a long-term approach.

In **the future**, further questions may arise:

Environmental issues form one of them. For several years, the Sahel has been facing a major climate crisis. The Rome Programme (2015-2017) proposes to include the consequences of environmental deterioration within national migration management strategies.¹⁵

Sensitive questions, such as the **voluntary and forced return** of migrants, which sometimes leads to lively debate, may also be approached more directly in the future, especially now that the dialogue has reached a high level of mutual confidence.

More innovative suggestions have also attracted attention, particularly in relation to **the city** as a reception area for migrants.

4.1 A dialogue between continuity and flexibility

4.2 Inter-African migration, a challenge linked to development

4.3 Operationalisation, a current and future challenge

4.4 Consolidated and inclusive cooperation between States

13 > UNHCR (2015): Asylum trends 2014. Levels and Trends in Industrialized Countries.

14 > UNHCR (2014): Statistical Online Population Database: Refugee population by country of asylum, 1960-2013 (end-year figures).

15 > Point III. Strengthen the synergies between migration and development, p.8.

4.2 Inter-African migration, a challenge linked to development

Over the last decade, Inter-African migration has not attracted as much interest in the framework of this dialogue as one might expect. The initial point of departure of the Rabat Process partly explains this situation. At that time, it was a question of managing unexpected flows between Africa and the EU. Since then, the **'South-South migration reality'** has nonetheless imposed itself and is mentioned at several points in the Rome Programme.

4.3 Operationalisation, a current and future challenge

Today, operationalisation constitutes an essential challenge for the Rabat Process. It is now a matter of defining the specific terms and conditions for the years to come.

A link must be maintained between political decisions and specific actions. A political reference framework exists and its longevity is essential for the future. Specific initiatives on a regional scale are intended to strengthen and not substitute it.

The **Rome Programme** (2015-2017) defines the outline for this new policy. In order to focus efforts, emphasis has been placed on two specific priority areas:

- » Strengthening of the link between migration and development by emphasising, in particular, the identification of root causes of migration and the role of diaspora;
- » The prevention and fight against irregular migration and related crimes, with particular attention to border management and return policies, including voluntary return and readmission, and in full respect of human rights.

The Rome Programme also recognises the key role played by **local stakeholders, diaspora, civil society, the private sector** and the **academic world** in managing and developing knowledge in the area of migration. It also undertakes to increase cooperation between these stakeholders and the authorities at national and regional levels.

In this spirit, the Rome Programme paves the way for actions which may be implemented within the context of the Rabat Process. In parallel, the provision of **new funding** and a 'Facility' for short-term technical assistance and flagship initiatives, granted by the EU, also strengthens the hope of seeing an increasing number of initiatives emerge. Operationalisation could thus promote the political engagement of new partners and the wider involvement of different national administrations affected by migration issues. In this context, **flagship initiatives** will facilitate the implementation of regional projects, combining a multi-

African countries are very keen to take into account the complexity of Inter-African flows; they all want attention paid to **regional mobility** as a development factor. Without doubt, it is one of the future challenges to be faced by the Rabat Process and one of the conditions for greater involvement of African countries.

However, it is not a matter of duplicating the actions of other South-South dialogues, for instance the **Migration Dialogue for West Africa** (MIDWA). In this subject area, as in many others, the Rabat Process is there to support existing initiatives with a complementary approach.

stakeholder approach to different topics. This new dynamic extends the previous phases of operationalisation which were essentially bilateral. One of the major advantages is also the direct involvement of partners in the formulation of projects. Members of the Steering Committee can share suggestions and ideas for initiatives which will then be considered for implementation and funded by the Support Project.

A decade on, strengthening **operationalisation** appears to be a priority objective. However, its role is a source of debate within the Process. Not all of the Rabat Process stakeholders share the same perspective. While some believe "operationalisation to be critical for the survival of the Process" others consider "the balance between dialogue and operationalisation to be an essential condition". Some insist on the fact that it would be important to set up technical projects labelled as Rabat Process with international funding, while others bear in mind that the main goal of a dialogue is to inspire political initiatives to be implemented by partner countries.

4.4 Consolidated and inclusive cooperation between States

However, operationalisation not only involves the realisation of projects. Strengthening **cooperation between States**, based on the improved circulation of expertise, also responds to the need to operationalise dialogue. Political engagement of the partner countries is thus the only condition required: for instance, the improvement of civil registry systems to fight against document fraud depends above all on the political will of the States and the quality of cooperation between the institutions concerned. The adoption of new migration policies, in respect of migrants' rights, also requires a greater involvement of the States. These 'indirect' processes of operationalisation are not new, but their development and consolidation bear witness to the increased responsibility of States, as they are faced with current migration challenges.

This new dynamic is also supported by an opening for **new stakeholders**: diaspora, civil society and private stakeholders. Their origins may vary according to the country and topics considered. They are there to help

with the thought process of elaborating the actions launched within the context of the Rabat Process. The inter-governmental character of the dialogue is not called into question, but implementation of specific actions can often benefit from the skills of **non-state actors**: for instance, the diaspora and migrants identified as political or economic leaders constitute models within their community and may therefore serve as useful 'interfaces' between the institutions in their country of origin and the diaspora. Civil society can also be involved in an ad-hoc manner: on certain subjects, such as human trafficking or the smuggling of migrants, their collaboration is often essential. In addition, other stakeholders may be occasionally invited to contribute to the dialogue (international organisations, local authorities, migrant associations, private companies, etc.).



Lessons learnt from a decade of dialogue

After ten years, the time has come to highlight the main lessons learnt. As demonstrated in this publication, the Rabat Process has been successful in combining a pragmatic

concept (the 'migration route') with functional governance. This political and strategic choice has resulted in a dialogue that provides various insights:

→ In search of a consensus, following a balanced approach

One of the main objectives of the Rabat Process is to create a framework for **balanced and comprehensive dialogue** characterised by mutual trust between the partner countries. This approach constitutes the key to political compromise and regional operational dialogue. It promotes the progressive adhesion of African countries to the dialogue.

Over the years, this dialogue has promoted a **shared understanding** of migration flows in the region. In this context, the search for a **consensus** around any given question does not exclude the consideration of national difficulties, either occasionally or on a more long-term basis.

→ Shared migration routes, facilitating close cooperation

The originality of the Rabat Process also relies on its construction around the concept of the **Euro-African migration route**. It constitutes added value which is relevant and useful for the dialogue and can be considered one of the keys to its success. The countries of origin, transit and destination, which sometimes have multiples statuses, are brought together

... a model which deserves to be replicated in other regions.

Members of the Steering Committee.

by the same migration routes and therefore share similar interests. While the orientation of migration flows regularly changes, the challenges remain the same. This particular approach to migration issues promotes **close cooperation** between the countries concerned, both in terms of political dialogue, and in the definition and implementation of specific projects.

→ Evolving priorities, according to the migratory context

Over the years, the initial priorities have been maintained and others have emerged according to the specific context. The evolution of the Rabat Process has largely been influenced by migratory situations at given moments in time, without ever contesting the global approach and the balance between the pillars. The dialogue has therefore been able to combine **continuity and flexibility**. This ability to adapt to new situations is also linked to the reactivity of the Steering Committee; this is one of its strengths. As such, the dialogue has been able to incite

progress with regard to the points of view of the partner countries which converge more and more. The **acquisition of skills** has strengthened this consensual approach towards migration. The exchange of good practices, which takes place at dialogue meetings and through the activities of the Support Project, promotes the reproduction of successful initiatives in other national contexts. Moreover, the network of Focal Points strengthens the dynamism of the dialogue.

→ Operationalisation, a matter of ensuring continued relevance of the dialogue

These developments are conducive to the implementation of specific and **operational initiatives** which translate the political will of the partner countries and encourage the exchange of good practices. The **construction of a balanced dialogue** is, above all, one of the conditions of operationalisation. Dialogue must precede action; all

of the partner countries agree on this. However, the future relation between both aspects is still a subject of debate. Yet, after a decade, **operationalisation** of the Rabat Process is clearly one of the challenges for continued relevance of the dialogue.

→ Reciprocity between the international agenda and the dialogue

It is therefore especially important to design dialogue and its operationalisation with a view to ensuring **complementarity** with other regional frameworks which exist between the EU and African States. It is essential to encourage synergies between the various frameworks, to avoid overlap and to ensure complementarity of their actions, both from a geographical and a thematic standpoint. The Rabat Process, which is nowadays broadly recognised and appreciated, influences the **international agenda**, and vice versa. This reciprocal nature bears witness to the strength of the dialogue and its

originality. Many highlight the dialogue's pragmatic nature, in touch with the current migratory context. The partner countries of the Process react to new issues without yielding to urgency or calling into question the balance between the pillars. This is proof of political maturity, founded on a decade of experience. Today, the challenge is to **preserve the dynamic** unique to the Rabat Process, so as to promote and strengthen the partners' commitment, and ensure longevity of the dialogue.





Rabat Process
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