



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA

Dialogue on Mediterranean Transit Migration (MTM) Conclusions by the Chairs

Joint ICMPD-EUROPOL MTM Meeting

*Migration Flows and Trends in the Mediterranean – Challenges for
Migration Management Systems,
Brdo, Slovenia, 7-9 June 2006*

(1) On 7-9 June 2006, 65 representatives of Arab and European Partner States (APS-EPS), Algeria, Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Morocco, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Syria, Turkey and the United Kingdom as well as Australia, DCAF, the European Council, Interpol, IOM, MARRI Centre, SECI Centre, Stability Pact and UNHCR, met informally in Brdo, Slovenia. The meeting, jointly organised by ICMPD and EUROPOL in co-operation with FRONTEX and hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia, aimed at the identification of the challenges posed by irregular migration to the migration management systems and contribute to the identification of possible solutions.

(2) The meeting was held within the framework of the Dialogue on Mediterranean Transit Migration (MTM). Following the Beirut meeting, this meeting was the second in a series of two preparatory meetings paving the way for the joint ICMPD-EUROPOL project *Towards Comprehensive Response to Mixed Migration Flows* which will tackle the identified problem areas.

(3) In his Opening Statement H.E Dr. Dimitrij Rupel Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia emphasised international migration as a policy objective of the country, advanced not only within the present framework, but also the theme of the 2005 Slovenian OSCE chairmanship and as one of the principal priorities of the forthcoming 2008 Slovenian Presidency of the European Union. He emphasised the need for developing a global strategy to strengthen the positive effects and reduce the negative consequences of migration. He also drew the attention to the five-year programme agreed upon by the EUROMED countries in Barcelona in November 2005.

(4) In his statement Mr Ivan Bizjak, Director General Justice and Home Affairs, General Secretariat of the European Council stressed the importance of informal dialogues like the MTM. He outlined the framework of co-operation in migration affairs of the EU as defined by the Hague programme, which underlines, among other things, the external dimension of migration management and the importance of a partnership approach. Recalling the global approach to migration, he highlighted the set of priority actions focussing on Africa and the Mediterranean, including, inter alia, border control issues, both legal and irregular migration and the migration/development nexus.

(5) In his statement, H.E. Valentin Inzko Ambassador of Austria to Slovenia on behalf of the Austrian Presidency of the European Union underscored the positive potential of effectively managed migration.

(6) The representative of the European Commission apologised for not being able to attend due to other unforeseen obligations. The participants expressed the hope that a representative of the European Commission will actively take part in the MTM meetings on a regular basis.

(7) Mr. Gottfried Zürcher, Director General of ICMPD expressed his thanks towards EUROPOL as partner in the present undertaking and his appreciation towards the co-operation with FRONTEX. Based upon the combined results of the MTM Beirut and Brdo Meetings, a series of technical workshops dealing with the main elements of a migration governance system for mixed flows will be held and designed to fit in the context of the selected migration routes in the Joint ICMPD-EUROPOL project *Towards Comprehensive Response to Mixed Migration Flows* to be launched in Portugal in autumn 2006. The joint project is expected to result in the “MTM Guidelines for Mixed Migration Flows”, including safeguards for effective refugee protection.

(8) H.E. Ahmed R. El Housseiny, Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister for Migration and Consular Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt underlined that the informal nature of the meeting represents a unique framework for dialogue, co-operation and co-ordination and supports preparations and efforts within formal frameworks such as the Barcelona Process and the Neighbourhood Policy. He also pointed out the multiple and complex nature of migration and the need to address only certain aspects, but still within a comprehensive approach.

(9) Development assistance, in particular in countries of origin, was emphasised by several participants as an important means to reduce illegal migration. It was noted that such measures would be important in a long-term perspective. It was further noted that development assistance and its influence on irregular migration is already on the agenda of several different fora and are expected to be translated into concrete actions. It was agreed that duplication with these fora should be avoided.

(10) During the discussions of the four separate working sessions the following key points emerged:

(a) **Working Session I:** Good Practices on Migration and Border Management in South East Europe

- Since 1999 regional and international partners have been cooperating through the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe on a broad agenda of democratic, social, economic and security sector reforms to promote stabilization of South Eastern Europe after the wars in the former Yugoslavia, and also the post-war reconstruction, social and economic development of that region along with their European perspective.
- The Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI) deals with the issue of population movements in the Western Balkans by promoting closer regional cooperation and a comprehensive, integrated, and coherent approach to the issues of asylum, migration, border management, visa policies, and refugee return and settlement. MARRI's top priority is the enhancement of regional cooperation in its areas of activity, as a vital part of EU integration process. MARRI was formed in 2003 within the context of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe. Since July 2004 this initiative is under regional ownership as part of the South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECF). MARRI is governed by its five Member States (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro) who meet twice a year at the MARRI Regional Forum.
- SECI regional centre has been established as a framework of permanent information sharing and operations centre to support the combat of trans-border crime. 12 member countries and in addition 16 observer countries cooperate on police and customs issues focused on South East Europe.

Participants took note of the presentations and discussions with great interest, and acknowledged them as examples of regional cooperation for effectively dealing with problems relating to migration in the Western Balkans. They recognised that these examples may be interesting models for developing future regional cooperation initiatives in other regions.

(b) **Working Session II:** Migration flows and trends in the Mediterranean – The migration routes approach:

- **Migration routes approach - experiences**
 - Following the EC priority actions focussing on dialogue and cooperation with Africa, the potential of migration routes initiatives, aimed at developing a joint strategy and operational cooperation between countries of origin, transit and destination so as to manage migration more effectively along key migration routes, was discussed.
 - Operational cooperation between countries of origin, transit and destination along the main migration routes within the concept of the migration routes approach can lead to concrete results.
- **Elements of operational cooperation**

- The concept of migration routes initiatives is relatively new, and therefore provides a flexible framework for comprehensive cooperation among the concerned countries.
- Areas of operational cooperation include, among others: apprehension/interception of illegal migrants; combating smuggling and trafficking networks; management of reception; and repatriation and readmission, including related challenges of identification and documentation.
- Operational cooperation in these areas could be implemented in partnership by way of (i) exchange of experience and information, especially in relation to document security and organised crime, (ii) concrete technical support and assistance, (iii) targeted training, including language, (iv) continued dialogue on a bilateral as well as multilateral level to address migration-related issues, (v) awareness raising and information campaigns, (vi) development and support assistance.
- **Possible new initiatives**
 - Given its flexible nature, the concept of the migration routes approach continues to be evolving. It was stressed that additional initiatives would be explored so as to cover the main identified migration routes. An example of a concrete initiative for operational cooperation focussing on the Horn of Africa was presented. It will complement similar activities already underway along the West Africa / Western Mediterranean migration routes. In doing so, it aims at contributing to a comprehensive and balanced approach to international migration.

(c) **Working Session III: Facilitated Illegal Migration**

- **Investigative tools used**
 - Enhanced information exchange and the establishment of a common electronic registration of convicted facilitators including fingerprints and photos are deemed necessary as one important tool in the global combat against facilitated illegal immigration
 - The benefit of common analysis and assessments of the gathered intelligence at a centralised level was emphasised.
 - A model of victim protection (including legalisation of stay) in connection to criminal investigation and dismantling of trafficking networks was presented and is regarded as an effective tool and a possible example to follow.
- **Cooperation between Immigration Liaisons Officers (ILO) and identification of the level of cooperation between neighbouring states and with international organisations**
 - The importance of co-operation and coherence between the relevant states and international partners including clear and agreed channels of information exchange are important to avoid duplication of efforts. Along the migration routes the utilisation of Immigration Liaison Officers and creation of fora for sharing intelligence locally, regional and international was highlighted by some participants as good practice. This should also be

seen in connection with the implementation of European Council Conclusions of 15-16 December 2005 and the series of priority actions focusing on Africa and the Mediterranean. One of these actions is to *'Establish regional networks of ILOs involving priority countries or regions and present reports on [facilitated] illegal immigration and trafficking, with the assistance of ILOs in key countries'*.

- Efforts to tackle the organised criminal networks based in the EU are as important as those taken in the African continent.

(d) Working Session IV: Border Management

- **Border vulnerability and border cooperation**

- A global, balanced and comprehensive approach to tackle the problems of illegal migration is required, which should work to short-, mid- and long-term goals. Many of the key issues in all of these areas have been identified.
- The sharing of information between APS and EPS is crucial, and as part of this process, the deployment and exchange of liaison officers is important.
- Whilst much of the current focus is on maritime illegal migration across the Mediterranean and Atlantic, the ongoing problems of illegal migration passing through official border crossing points should not be ignored, in particular the increasing use of forged documentation. Training assistance in identifying forged and genuine documents and up-to-date information on current trends in respect of forged or counterfeit documents would be welcomed by APS.
- Cross-border co-operation to the appropriate extent, including provision of training elements, has proved, and is proving, effective in the short-term.
- The deployment of document advisers/airline liaison officers has proved an effective tool in limiting illegal migration flows through official border crossing points and could be deployed upon approval by the relevant authorities.
- More effort needs to be made to disseminate information concerning both the dangers of resorting to using illegal migration routes and the availability of legal migration channels.

(11) Challenges posed by international migration have reached a global dimension affecting all countries. In addition to security considerations, they have also social, economic, cultural and even political aspects, which require comprehensive and balanced solutions. This in mind, the following concrete measures in the short, and medium-term have been proposed.

(12) Recommendations

The recommendations of the first preparatory meeting held in Beirut in April 2006, and the following recommendations will help to refine the forthcoming project *Towards Comprehensive Response to Mixed Migration Flows* within the framework of the MTM dialogue later this year. Moreover, the concrete operational activities

which have been proposed should be further developed within the wider MTM Dialogue.

1. Common agreements on joint priorities for a comprehensive response to mixed flows
2. Posting of Immigration Liaison Officers along the identified migration routes and the exploration of the potential inputs of these ILOs
3. Assess and evaluate the risk and threats faced by countries on the identified migration routes which might change according to the circumstances
4. Joint patrols where deemed relevant
5. Secure real-time web-based information database eventually to be updated and controlled by an international police organisation
6. Use of effective media campaigns to highlight both the dangers of illegal migration as well as publishing the availability of legal migration channels to Europe
7. Specialist training and technical equipments and tools requested by APS should receive serious consideration, and suitable donor EPS and funding sources identified. In this regard, appropriate advice from the European Commission and ICMPD is welcomed

The implementation of the proposed activities entails commitment of the participating states, the representatives of which emphasised the need for finding a balanced approach to the management of migration flows and the long-term overall objective of the freedom of movement of people. They also stressed the link between migration and development.

(13) Once all completed questionnaires have been received by the MTM Secretariat, a draft assessment will be communicated to APS and EPS for final comments. The results of the preparatory phase will provide the basis for the next phase of the MTM dialogue.

(14) The main aims and objectives of the project *Towards Comprehensive Response to Mixed Migration Flows* were presented in detail.

(15) Participants expressed their gratitude and satisfaction to the organisers for the excellent meeting arrangements, the fruitful and open discussions and especially the host country for the hospitality.

(16) Portugal emphasised its support to the dialogue and invited participants to the Launching Conference of the project *Towards Comprehensive Response to Mixed Migration Flows* which is to be held in Portugal in October 2006, which was welcomed by all participants.

(17) The National Coordinator of the Stability Pact of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Slovenia concluded the meeting and welcomed Portugal as the host of the forthcoming MTM Conference.