Conference Conclusions


1. On January 27-28, 2005, about 50 representatives of Algeria, Austria, Australia, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, France, Italy, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Morocco, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Syria, Switzerland, Turkey and the United Kingdom, as well as the League of Arab States, Europol met in Copenhagen to discuss the medium and long-term issues, relating to the combating of root causes of irregular flows through development co-operation, better joint management of migration, including return and reintegration issues. Representatives of the European Commission, UNHCR, and IOM attended as observers. The conference aimed at a comparative analysis of the main policy approaches to linking migration and development adopted by European countries and the European Union. Equally important was to obtain the views of the Arab Partner States on these policy approaches, as well as their views on cooperation to contribute to their implementation. The Meeting was financed by the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and jointly organized by DIIS, Copenhagen, and ICMPD, Vienna.

2. In his opening statement, the Danish State Secretary of Development Cooperation presented initiatives in the area of linking development and migration, emphasizing refugee repatriation perspective and the Danish region of origin policy. Referring to the Barcelona Process within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, the League of Arab States emphasized the importance of multilateral approaches to better manage migration flows in order to maximize the benefits for the countries involved. In this context, the conclusion of the memorandum of understanding with ICMPD was announced to be signed in February 2005.

3. One desk study and four expert papers provided the background information for the informal dialogue: i) European policies and attitudes towards the migration-development issue, and four expert papers on respectively, ii) The actual state and recent qualitative evolutions regarding migrations in between Maghreb and the European Union, iii) Undocumented Sub-Saharan African migrants in Morocco, iv) Forced migration, conflict and development, and v) Policy responses in MENA countries of transit for migrants: An Analytical Framework for Policy-Making. The purpose of the background studies was to propose avenues for policy options on possible areas of cooperation between European and Arab partner states in the field of migration. More concretely, to discuss and propose effective means to address the root causes in the form of a catalogue of concrete policy actions.

4. In an active debate, a number of concrete proposals on how to manage migration for more development and possible areas of cooperation between European and Arab partner states were put forward by the participants, emphasising the Alexandria Conclusions, and also making reference to other formal and informal dialogues and co-operation frameworks, such as the Barcelona Process and the 5+5 Dialogue and the European Neighbourhood Policy. Such proposals include migration policy developments, co-operation in capacity building efforts, rationalisation and facilitation of orderly migration movements as well as strengthening of migration control measures in the transit
countries and would potentially lead to positive interdependency situations with destination countries through increased development cooperation. In this context, the French delegation explained its co-development policy and practical experiences in implementing it. These proposals will be collected in a catalogue of policy options that will form the main part of the final conference report.

5. In a joint statement the Arab Partner States emphasised the importance of building progress on the Alexandria Conclusions and acknowledged the development potential of their expatriate communities. At the same time they underlined that the necessary structures to make full use of the expatriate potential were not yet adequately developed. In order to better mobilize this potential, the capacities of responsible administrative structures, such as expatriate ministries, should be strengthened through co-operation. This would facilitate economic, social and technological knowledge transfers, and introduce reforms in areas such as the status of women in society.

6. The representative of the European Commission underlined the importance of obtaining the views and concrete proposals of the Arab Partner States on their migration challenges, particularly as affected by the situation in their neighbourhood and adjacent regions, in order to foster a spirit of partnership and dialogue in the formulation of future Community policies and strategies on migration and development.

7. Libya kindly offered to host the next meeting of the informal dialogue on Mediterranean Transit Migration (MTM) in Tripoli during April 2005.

8. The participants thanked the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs for supporting the conference.