



General Secretariat  
Social Affairs Sector  
Population Policies,  
Expatriates and  
Migration Department

## **The New European Neighbourhood Policy**

### ***Arab Position with Regard to Migration***

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#### **Introduction**

Within the framework of the ongoing consultations conducted by the European Union (EU) on the "New European Neighborhood Policy" that seeks enhancement of bilateral and regional relations between the EU and its neighbouring countries including ongoing consultations between the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States (LAS) and the European Commission; and on occasion of convening the First Meeting of the Arab Regional Consultative Process (ARCP) on Migration, held at LAS headquarters on 27 and 28 April 2015, the meeting of Arab EU neighbouring countries was convened on 28 April 2015 following the aforementioned Meeting. This meeting was attended by representatives of Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia with an aim to coordinate with these countries to formulate an Arab position concerning migration in this new Policy.

Participants value the cooperation and consultation between the General Secretariat and the European Commission on the New European Neighbourhood Policy, which represents a good opportunity to enhance mutual understanding between the EU and its neighbouring countries. They also value the ongoing bilateral talks between Arab countries and the EU on this Policy.

Within the framework of the shared responsibility of the two sides, participants emphasize the following points concerning migration in the New European Neighbourhood Policy:

#### **I. Mobility**

- The importance of focusing more on facilitating mobility, in particular facilitating visa procedures (Schengen) for educational, scientific, cultural, training, professional and other purposes; and improving conditions to obtain residence in Europe for Arab entrepreneurs and investors, and facilitating family reunion procedures.

#### **II. Regular Migration**

- Regulate migration policy to benefit both origin and destination countries. For the ENP countries, migration is a solution for the lack of local employment

opportunities. For the EU countries, it provides a solution to the demographic imbalance and ageing population trends in the core countries over the short run. Regular channels for labor migration should be strengthened between EU and its neighbors by providing real migration opportunities through announcing labour market needs and skills matching. Recognition of qualifications (certificates) and training is also crucial, in addition to cooperating in providing training for potential migrants' rehabilitation.

- Integrate the issue of rights of all migrants and members of their families in the New Policy, in particular those related to social insurance and health care.
- Call for facilitation of family reunion procedures, so as to enhance the protection of migrants from different forms of violence, trafficking and exploitation and ensure their access to necessary legal protection.
- Support efforts undertaken by states, institutions and initiatives aiming to foster understanding between different cultures (e.g. Arab World Institute - AWI in Paris and Museum With No Frontiers - MWNF), in addition to, developing awareness programmes by media, educational institutions, religious organizations, civil society organizations and others; and setting effective policies for migrants integration that would contribute to achieving social cohesion and safeguarding their rights.

### **III. Irregular Migration**

- Participating States emphasize the importance of combating irregular migration, smuggling and trafficking of migrants, and prevention of criminal networks, and simultaneously highlight the need to exert more efforts to protect these vulnerable groups.
- Emphasize the need to associate short-term policies setting out means of combating irregular migration with long-term approaches that address the root causes of irregular migration flows - highlighting the relation between migration and development- as the security perspective is not considered enough to address the root causes of the problem.
- Urge the EU not only to settle with monitoring missions, but also to revive large scale search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean, and provide adequate shelters for them in Europe -in accordance with international human rights instruments-, and consider asylum requests in the light of the continued tragedy of sinking boats carrying those migrants.
- Provide support and fund for the establishment of small and medium-sized enterprises in EU neighbouring countries, which would contribute to creation of job opportunities for the youth in their countries of origin.
- Provide necessary support for building the capacity of those working in the law enforcement authorities and relevant institutions, and provide programmes and equipment to enhance border control capabilities in the area of combating human trafficking.

#### **IV. Migration and Development**

- Given the important linkage between migration and development, the EU should cooperate with its partners to enhance existing initiatives to transfer skills, expertise and knowledge to migrants' countries of origin.
- Call on the EU to urge its Member States to take practical and procedural measures to facilitate the transfer of Arab migrant remittances through adoption of procedures that reduce the cost of transfer of migrant remittances and increase their flow within official channels, beside developing joint programmes to encourage investments in their home countries, highlighting the fact that remittances cannot be considered as an alternative for international development assistance.
- Confirm the importance of cooperating with the department concerned with migration at the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States, which provides the opportunity to implement activities targeting Arab Member States, particularly in the area of training and dialogue that aim at policy coordination.

#### **Other Issues**

- Call on the EU and the international community to seek halt of the continued Israeli practices aiming at displacing the Palestinian people and forcing them to emigrate from their homeland; and emphasize the right of the Palestinian people to return to their homeland according to international resolutions, in particular UN Resolution 194.
- The need to adopt more effective mechanisms within the framework of the New European Neighbourhood Policy concerning migration that responds to the rapid changes characterizing the EU neighbouring countries of the southern Mediterranean.
- Emphasize the need to confront the phenomena of Xenophobia and Islamophobia by protecting the rights of migrants, as guaranteed in regional and international conventions and keep them out of racist practices.
- The need to provide protection for migrants and refugees, and their rights, particularly in times of crises; and stress the importance of providing assistance to refugees offering them humanitarian admission programmes, facilitating resettlement procedures in EU countries, and endorsing measures to secure temporary protection in EU countries.
- Provide assistance for EU neighbouring countries in the areas of development and exchange of statistics on migration, improve the quality of statistical services and continue development of database.
- Take into account the specificity of each of the EU neighbouring countries when applying the New Policy, particularly the countries affected by regional conflicts and those affected by refugees.