



ROME DECLARATION

WE, Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Ministers of Interior, and Ministers in charge of Migration, high representatives of the following countries: AUSTRIA, BELGIUM, BENIN, BULGARIA, BURKINA FASO, CAMEROON, CABO VERDE, CHAD, CYPRUS, THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC, CONGO, CROATIA, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO, DENMARK, EQUATORIAL GUINEA, GERMANY, ESTONIA, FINLAND, FRANCE, GABON, GAMBIA, GHANA, GREECE, GUINEA, GUINEA-BISSAU, HUNGARY, IRELAND, ITALY, IVORY COAST, LATVIA, LIBERIA, LITHUANIA, LUXEMBOURG, MALI, MALTA, MAURITANIA, MOROCCO, NIGER, NIGERIA, NORWAY, NETHERLANDS, POLAND, PORTUGAL, CZECH REPUBLIC, ROMANIA, SENEGAL, SIERRA LEONE, SLOVAKIA, SLOVENIA, SPAIN, SWEDEN, SWITZERLAND, TOGO, TUNISIA, UNITED KINGDOM; the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission; the European Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship; and representatives of regional organisations;

MEETING at the invitation of the Italian Republic on 27 November 2014 in Rome, in the presence of Algeria attending as an observer, for the Fourth Euro-African Ministerial Conference on migration and development, and on this occasion passing the relay from Senegal to Italy;

REAFFIRMING the current relevance of the objectives set by the Dakar Strategy, adopted on 23 November 2011 at the Third Euro-African Ministerial Conference on migration and development, in particular regarding the significant results achieved by its implementation;

HIGHLIGHTING the continuity of the objectives set in the Dakar Strategy by the Declaration and the Action Plan, adopted at the First Euro-African Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development on 10 and 11 July 2006 in Rabat, and the Declaration and Three-Year Cooperation Programme adopted at the Second Euro-African Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development on 25 November 2008 in Paris;

CONSCIOUS of the opportunities and challenges related to migration, in particular, in terms of national and regional development, as well as of the importance of a coordinated and balanced approach to migration issues between dialogue partners;

AGREEING on the need to strengthen cooperation between countries of origin, transit and destination on migration issues;

TAKING ACCOUNT OF the changing and complex nature of the migration phenomenon and the necessity to adapt to new trends, in particular, the increase in South-South migration at regional level, and congratulating in this context the Kingdom of Morocco on the reforms undertaken in the framework of its new migration policy, as well as its initiative for an African alliance on migration and development;

HIGHLIGHTING the key role played by local actors, diasporas, civil society, the private sector and academia, in terms of management and in developing knowledge in the area of migration, as well as the need to increase cooperation between these actors and authorities at national and regional level;



NOTING the ongoing crises, affecting in some cases countries of the Rabat Process, which are subject to instability, particularly in terms of security;

TAKING NOTE of the evolution of root causes of migration, and the political and operational responses that these challenges require;

BEARING IN MIND the needs related to promoting international protection in keeping with relevant international and regional instruments, brought about by the tragedies and crises that have affected countries of the Rabat Process these last few years;

CONSCIOUS of the challenges posed in finding and implementing sustainable solutions in the context of international protection;

CONVINCED that, in order to meet the objective of controlled migration management, it is imperative to strengthen cooperation in border management, and also in the areas of readmission and return, combating document fraud and irregular migration;

UNDERSCORING the importance of prosecuting smugglers and traffickers and dismantling their criminal networks which present a serious threat to the lives of migrants;

CONFIRMING that efficient organisation of legal migration and mobility has a positive outcome for all parties involved, whether that be for the migrant or the State of origin, transit or destination; this should be reflected in the United Nations post-2015 development agenda;

CONSIDERING the need to adopt specific policies on the integration of immigrants, given their potential and their positive contribution to the development of their countries of destination;

HAVING REGARD TO the added value and progress made in strengthening political dialogue between partners within the framework of the Rabat Process, and to stimulating operational activities in the area of migration;

EXPRESSING the need to maintain consistency between the Rabat Process and other relevant international forums, such as the Africa-EU Partnership, the Global Forum on Migration and Development, as well as the Post-2015 United Nations Development Programme;

BEARING IN MIND, in particular:

- The Declaration adopted following the second United Nations High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development on 4 October 2013 in New York;
- The Declaration of the Fourth EU-Africa Summit as well as the EU-Africa Declaration on Migration and Mobility adopted at the summit held in Brussels on 2 and 3 April 2014;
- The conclusions from the seventh Global Forum on Migration and Development meeting, which was held from 14 to 16 May 2014 in Stockholm;

TAKING ACCOUNT OF the conclusions of the co-chairs of the three thematic meetings during the third phase of the Rabat Process, which discussed the use of data to support evidence-based policy making



Rabat Process

Euro-African Dialogue on Migration and Development

(11-12 September 2013, Dakar), border management (5-6 November 2013, Madrid), and migrants in a crisis context (24-25 April 2014, Paris);

HIGHLIGHTING the importance of both maintaining the political dimension of the Rabat Process as well as pursuing its operationalisation by reinforcing high priority objectives;

WELCOMING important progress made in strengthening cooperation between partners in relation to migration, particularly through the development of political dialogue and, at operational level, through an enhanced awareness of the topics identified as common objectives, which have been achieved as a result of the Rabat Process;

HIGHLIGHTING the fact that, with a view to the development of the Rabat Process and to strengthening its position, it is important to particularly emphasise two specific thematic areas considered as priorities in understanding the migration phenomenon, so as to improve the perception of those areas:

- Strengthening the link between migration and development, based on the conviction that managed migration can contribute to the sustainable development of countries of origin and destination. In this context, it will be necessary to deepen and further pursue actions and reflections to address migration in all its dimensions, in its economic, social and environmental contexts that are constantly evolving. In this sense, it will be necessary to better involve diasporas, to increase the positive impact of fund transfers in full respect of their private nature, to promote the transfer of skills and know-how and to encourage the contribution of refugees to medium and long term development;
- The prevention of and fight against irregular migration as well as related crimes, particularly human trafficking and migrant smuggling, with due regard for the human rights of migrants. In this context, strengthening cooperation in border management and return policies (including voluntary return) as well as readmission, are core elements;

WE AGREE to continue to implement the Dakar Strategy and to this end **WE AGREE TO ADOPT** the Rome Programme for 2015-2017. The Programme is based on four complementary pillars, including a pillar on the promotion of international protection which is an innovation in relation to the declarations of preceding Ministerial Conferences, notably:

- I. Organising mobility and legal migration;
- II. Improving border management and combating irregular migration;
- III. Strengthening the synergies between migration and development;
- IV. Promoting international protection.

The Rome Programme is annexed to this Declaration and is an integral part thereof.



ANNEX: THE ROME PROGRAMME FOR 2015-2017

The Rome Programme, which is an instrument for the realisation, tangibility and visibility of the Rabat Process, establishes, for 2015-2017, a solid, ambitious and detailed thematic framework for cooperation for its fourth phase as a continuation of the Dakar Strategy. It defines concrete implementation methods, indicators and timeframes, in order to pursue the operationalisation of the dialogue initiated during the third phase.

The Rome Programme results from an in-depth consultation with dialogue partners, taking into account the results and the work carried out within the framework of activities on building and sharing knowledge and good practices.

While respecting the overall balance, it responds to the concerns of the dialogue partners by, in particular, enabling a cross-cutting approach to topics such as respect for the human rights of all migrants and South-South migration.

SECTION 1. THEMATIC PILLARS

I. ORGANISING MOBILITY AND LEGAL MIGRATION

The organisation of mobility and legal migration have always been central to the Rabat Process, given the recognised potential that it has to support economic, human and social development, both in countries of origin as well as in countries of destination. The Rabat Process has already looked at this topic in depth, in terms of the social rights of migrants and the improvement of civil registration systems. The Rome Programme ties in with the efforts undertaken, while respecting the sovereign right of States with regard to the entry of economic migrants onto their territory, to promote the three components below:

1. Support regional mobility and facilitate exchanges between the various actors involved in mobility

- Strengthen support programmes for regional integration and intra-African free movement, by notably giving special priority to the role of regional economic communities in promoting, implementing and monitoring policies related to regional mobility;
- Improve regional professional mobility, especially for certain categories of persons (such as researchers, businesspeople, merchants, craftsmen, artists and athletes), taking into account the situation in national labour markets;
- Advance regional mobility through greater involvement of the private sector, in view of the role that it can play in this field, including the promotion of mobility within multinational companies;



- Promote regular contacts, including networking, and consultations between social partners in the countries of origin and destination and between social partners and authorities, especially with regard to the implementation and evaluation of migration policy priorities;
- Strengthen institutional capacities in the management of demand and supply of employment and vocational training, as well as links between institutions responsible for migration issues and employment and human resource management policies;
- Encourage the provision of opportunities for study and work in the countries of destination, on the basis of the labour market situation, particularly through the introduction of circular migration schemes;

2. Integrate the migration element in education and employment policies

- Develop knowledge and information tools concerning the labour market and the relationship between migration and employment, also with a view to better matching supply and demand of labour, and to strengthening policies for the integration of workers coming from third countries into the labour market;
- Strengthen institutional capacities in introducing strategies to bridge the discrepancies between labour supply and demand at the national, regional and international level;
- Encourage the establishment of joint systems to recognise acquired skills and qualifications, and develop joint training programmes between the countries of origin and destination, taking into account national and foreign labour market needs;
- Support the plans of emigrants who wish to return and define the terms of their professional reintegration in their countries of origin through supportive policies and with the help of the diaspora.

3. Guarantee respect of migrants' rights

- Ensure that migrants with a legal status are treated, in the country of destination, in accordance with national, regional or international laws relating to working conditions, access to social security and family reunification, freedom of movement and establishment. The portability of social rights of lawfully residing migrants should also be treated in conformity with international conventions, bilateral conventions, and national laws applicable in this area;
- Strengthen policies aimed at integration and the fight against discrimination by furthering the exchange of good practices and information and data, as well as information campaigns on these matters in Africa and Europe, including on the positive contribution of migrants to the country of destination and its society;
- Promote the fight against discrimination and stigmatisation linked in particular to large-scale dissemination of infectious diseases;



- Strengthen cooperation between States, and between the competent agencies and institutions of the European Union and the countries of the Maghreb, West and Central Africa, so as to promote equal treatment with regard to social security, respecting national legislation.

4. Protect, promote and facilitate the management of civil status and the issuance of identity and travel documents

- Implement communication strategies highlighting the importance of civil status registration as a factor for progress and economic and social stability, and organise campaigns for free civil status registration;
- Reinforce legal and practical frameworks for accessing citizenship and civil register, particularly in order to reduce the risks of statelessness;
- Develop an action plan, based on a comprehensive assessment, for the creation of national registration systems and central computerised civil registers as a single source for the issuance of secure identity and travel documents, in accordance with International Civil Aviation Organization standards, ensuring reliable identification and movement of individuals as well as access to their rights;
- Promote the introduction of a single national identifier and the use of new technologies, such as biometric identifiers, in order to guarantee the authenticity of the documents and facilitate the management and sustainability of civil status registers;
- Support the exchange of information on civil status matters in compliance with the protection of data and privacy, and strengthen the capacities of the institutions responsible for civil status, namely through the development of guides and model training programmes for trainers;
- Extend the network for the exchange of information between partners of the Rabat Process with regard to the detection of false documents;
- Promote the use of new technologies and information systems in the management of documents required for the entry and residence of migrants, especially in the form of technical assistance.

II. IMPROVE BORDER MANAGEMENT AND COMBAT IRREGULAR MIGRATION

Border management, already a priority theme in the third phase of the Rabat Process, in addition to combating irregular migration, is a high-priority field of action for all dialogue partners, whether they are countries of origin, transit or destination. The Rabat Process has enabled a close dialogue on these issues. This framework can provide added value to strengthen political and operational cooperation, particularly in four areas:

1. Support countries of origin, transit and destination in Africa in terms of preventing and managing irregular immigration

- Adopt a public awareness and communication strategy on the risks and costs of irregular migration.



- Ensure respect for the fundamental rights of migrants at borders, by guaranteeing the right to request international protection;
- Adopt administrative and regulatory measures aimed at greater efficiency in dealing with irregular migration;
- Plan training for all agents involved in aspects relating to the management of irregular migration, in keeping with human rights and incorporating specific requirements concerning vulnerable people and mixed migration flows;
- Plan training on risk analysis to evaluate migration trends and their consequences, particularly in terms of security.

2. Strengthen operational cooperation in border management and readmission

- Develop national and regional strategies leading to integrated border management;
- Develop sound partnerships through cooperation agreements between countries of origin, transit and destination and at the intra-African level, particularly in terms of return and readmission, and strengthen operational cooperation between partner States in the area of readmission, particularly in the framework of article 13 of the ACP-EU Cotonou Agreement;
- Strengthen operational cooperation between neighbouring States, including through capacity building of their administrations, with a view to making borders safe and secure, as well as improving information exchange in the area of border management at air, land and maritime borders, particularly through an operational network of contact points between border authorities. In this context, it is important to encourage the creation of joint patrols and joint posts, while also taking into account the need for adequate involvement of cross-border communities;
- Set up more bilateral training programmes for staff at borders and for trainers;
- Develop, in keeping with human rights, cooperation in the areas of readmission, identification of irregular migrants and issuance of travel documents, including cooperation on capacity building of the partners of the Process;
- Strengthen technical and operational cooperation in the areas of new technologies and information systems related to integrated border management and border control.

3. Fight against criminal networks, human trafficking and migrant smuggling

- Develop measures aimed at public perception of human trafficking and migrant smuggling and conduct campaigns focusing on the fight against and the prevention of these phenomena. In this context, the exploitation of irregular immigrants and the protection of vulnerable groups should also be addressed;
- Devise concrete strategies to fight against human trafficking and migrant smuggling at national, regional and inter-regional level, by increasing the exchange of good practices and by improving coordination in order to better protect those involved, while keeping in mind international law,



including the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air;

- Set up operational solutions, such as the creation of services specialised in controlling cross-border crimes;
- Train staff responsible for the detection and prosecution of criminal networks;
- Promote the protection of victims at national and regional level, by supporting the development of laws and regulations that offer guarantees, and by training professionals in reception, the examination of cases and protection.

4. Facilitate voluntary return and reintegration

- Develop a solid and comprehensive framework at regional level for durable return;
- Adopt support measures for return and reintegration, adapted and tailored to the needs of returnees;
- Strengthen administrative capacities of countries of return, particularly with regard to the reception, reintegration and training of those involved;
- Exchange good practices in international fora and implement information campaigns on voluntary return and reintegration;
- Develop national networks of contact points to support return and reintegration;
- Develop measures and the exchange of good practices for the preparation of departure and return.

III. STRENGTHENING SYNERGIES BETWEEN MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Strengthening synergies between migration and development, which is the essence of the Rabat Process, is the top priority. This topic continues to cause numerous challenges as far as the traditional areas of intervention on this subject are concerned; namely, maximising the contribution of diasporas to the development of their countries of origin and destination, facilitating the transfer of funds, facilitating the mobility of skills between countries of origin and destination and vice versa, the issue of brain drain and encouraging the practice of circular migration. In this context, other questions, such as the importance of South-South movements, the impact of mobility as well as rising urbanisation could also be taken into account.

The Rome Programme focuses on the two aspects below:

1. Promote the positive potential of migration and of the diaspora, both for the country of origin and the country of destination

- Improve knowledge of the development potential of the diaspora, particularly in the South-South context. In this context, develop a regional strategy aimed at encouraging its involvement in local



development and the assessment of the impact of initiatives in which it has participated and to which it has contributed;

- Promote evidence-based policy-making, investment in the collection and use of migration data, the exchange of good practices in the area of data collection on the diaspora as well as the sharing of information on the potential of the diaspora;
- Strengthen capacities and entrepreneurship of the diaspora, in particular by encouraging its financial education on productive sector investments and using incentives for that purpose, as well as by assisting countries of destination in the South to create guarantee funds for migrants' investments;
- Promote synergies between private sector initiatives and development policies through, among others, the involvement of the diaspora;
- Promote the contribution that the diaspora can make to the integration of migrants in the societies of countries of destination, by strengthening its capacities in this area;
- Facilitate migrant consultations, in order to make the most of their contribution to and participation in social life, by also promoting the access of migrants to social networks;
- Channel, simplify and optimise fund transfers, while taking into account a gender-based approach, with, for example, the introduction of financial education programmes, as well as the reduction of costs and of the time taken transferring funds, including through partnerships between relevant national actors including, where appropriate, postal services;
- Encourage initiatives targeting the integration of migration into regional, national and local public policies on development, promoting the role of the diaspora, civil society and local authorities.

2. Act on links between migration and the main challenges to development, in particular, the consequences of environmental degradation, political instability, and food insecurity and poverty.

- Develop North-South and South-South cooperation, particularly between universities, in research and analysis of the root causes of migration in order to draw up suitable strategies and policies;
- Take into account the consequences of environmental degradation, poverty, political instability, and food insecurity in national strategies on migration management;
- Evaluate the potential of existing mechanisms and frameworks, including strategies on development and the fight against poverty, as well as national adaptation plans, in order to find solutions tailored to migration that may be the result of global challenges such as the consequences of environmental degradation;
- Study, including at regional level, the various possible political and operational responses to these challenges and to the multiple scenarios for population movement that these can cause.



IV. PROMOTE INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

Respect for access to international protection and the principle of non-refoulement of asylum seekers and refugees that were already included in the Dakar Strategy as a sub-objective of objective 5 on reinforcing the protection of vulnerable groups also constitute a priority objective of the Rome Programme. The latter raises this issue to the level of the fourth pillar of the Rabat Process to reflect the current situation and the importance of questions raised by the movement of persons requiring international protection in the region of the Rabat Process. Two aspects are particularly important:

1. Reinforce legal, political and operational frameworks relating to international protection on national and regional levels

- Promote the ratification of relevant international instruments and adopt necessary laws, regulations or necessary structures in order for these instruments and their principles to take effect, as well as to ensure their implementation at national level;
- Develop the policy on the integration of persons eligible for international protection in the host country;
- Work towards improved protection of unaccompanied minors' rights while safeguarding the best interests of the child, in a coordinated manner in all areas, particularly awareness-raising, prevention, protection, as well as assisted return and reintegration;
- Adopt a regional action plan to define the modalities for an effective response, particularly in the event of a mass influx of refugees and of persons eligible for international protection, to guarantee durable solutions on a voluntary basis;
- Strengthen the cooperation between States on the analysis and management of asylum systems and international protection;
- Promote training programmes and campaigns to provide information and raise awareness on asylum and international protection policies.

2. Develop capacities for reception, determination of status, management of secondary movements and implementation of durable solutions

- Offer technical and material assistance, including in terms of training, to support social and economic structures as well as community services in host communities during the mass influx of persons eligible for international protection;
- Create areas for reception, listening and guidance and develop training programmes for employees in charge of determining the status of persons seeking international protection;
- Promote measures in the area of regional protection and development, particularly through tools such as Regional Development and Protection Programmes;
- Strengthen the capacities of national institutions responsible for persons benefiting from international protection, and help them to acquire adequate means in terms of trained human



resources, logistical and technical resources allowing them to meet all the needs of the persons concerned;

- Reinforce capacities for on-site support to persons eligible for international protection by offering training and mentoring programmes, advice and general guidance to governmental and non-governmental organisations;
- Analyse and support the contribution of refugees, particularly during situations of protracted displacement, to the national and local economy of the host country;
- Intensify cooperation between local, national and international actors, to improve anticipation and management of the movements of populations in crisis situations and to facilitate durable solutions over the long term (voluntary return and reintegration into the country of origin, local integration in the host country or resettlement in third countries).

SECTION 2. IMPLEMENTATION

Since its launch in 2006, the Rabat Process has evolved and now represents a framework for cooperation and tangible action. 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.

This improvement is reflected in an enhanced method of governance of the dialogue, the introduction of new policy frameworks and an increase in concrete measures.

I. ACTORS

The Rabat Process is an intergovernmental dialogue that is based on a consensual and flexible approach, which has led to its success. This mode of operation has its origin in the governing body of the dialogue, the Steering Committee, the importance of which is reaffirmed by the Rome Programme, both in terms of strategic guidance and the implementation of actions and concrete measures.

Moreover, an effective contribution from relevant African and European institutions and agencies, local governments, the private sector, civil society, including diaspora organisations, as well as academia and the media should continue to be supported in the Rabat Process, with a view to assigning them a greater role in the implementation of projects in the area of migration.

II. CROSS-CUTTING ASPECTS

On the whole, the activities of the Rabat Process should be given a structured framework, in order to measure its impact more easily, boost its visibility and improve the definition of its general strategy. This involves:



1. The definition of objectives and their evaluation

The fourth phase of the Rabat Process will celebrate ten years since the launch of the dialogue, which is a good opportunity to set objectives enabling an assessment of the results of the activities carried out since the first phase of the Process.

2. Greater outreach of the Rabat Process

With a view to improved visibility of the activities of the Rabat Process, it is necessary to continue information activities and disseminate the results obtained and to promote the advancement of the Process, on both political and operational levels.

3. An emphasis on the exchange of good practices, notably at South-South level

The exchange of good practices was identified as a priority of the Support Project during the third phase of the Rabat Process. The fourth phase of the Rabat Process raises the South-South aspect as a cross-cutting issue of the dialogue. Therefore, particular attention is given to this aspect as part of the effort to improve the exchange of good practices.

In this context, it is worth underlining the importance of regional initiatives such as the African alliance on migration and development.

III. ACTIVITIES

The Rabat Process represents the main regional dialogue framework between countries of origin, transit and destination of migration in West, Central and North Africa. All partners commit to upholding the political dynamism of the dialogue, while ensuring the consistency of intergovernmental policies.

The Rabat Process must remain an action-oriented dialogue. As such, it inspires initiatives implemented at bilateral, sub-regional and regional level by all involved actors, including European and African States which are members of the Rabat Process and relevant regional organisations. All partners support the implementation of the Rome Programme on a voluntary basis, depending on the specificities of their migratory situation and the priorities that result therefrom.

In particular, all partners are also committed to reflecting the priorities of the Rabat Process in the development of their national strategies on migration and development and within other existing multilateral dialogue frameworks. They are committed to finding the resources necessary for the implementation of current actions as well as for those resulting from the priorities defined in the Rome Programme.



IV. FUTURE PRIORITY AREAS OF INTERVENTION

The Rome Declaration emphasises two thematic priority areas to focus efforts, on the one hand, on the strengthening of the link between migration and development, by emphasising in particular the identification of root causes of migration and the role of the diaspora and, on the other hand, the prevention and fight against irregular migration and related crimes, with particular attention to border management and return policies, including voluntary return and readmission, in full respect of human rights.

The development of initiatives and the creation of partnerships along these two thematic areas are essential and particularly encouraged. In order to support these actions and to pursue the operationalisation of the dialogue, concrete areas of intervention were identified in the conclusions of the three thematic meetings of the third phase of the Rabat Process¹ and the two working groups at the Senior Officials Meeting, in Rabat, on 26-27 June 2014².

The Steering Committee will ensure continuous follow-up on the implementation of initiatives regarding these two thematic areas. To this end, it will seek the commitment of all partners, create necessary synergies between the various ongoing and future initiatives and ensure coherence with other relevant dialogues.

In this respect, partners of the Rabat Process are invited to undertake and implement concrete initiatives, particularly in the context of above-mentioned thematic areas, to which priority will be given in terms of financial support, taking into account their coherence with the objectives of the Rome Declaration and Programme. To this effect, it is important to identify appropriate financial resources. The Steering Committee will meet in the course of the first semester of 2015 in order to examine the concrete initiatives in question, available financing as well as monitoring and evaluation of recommendations of the various meetings of the Rabat Process.

¹ These meetings focused on the use of data for evidence-based policy making (Dakar, 11-12 September 2013), border management (Madrid, 5-6 November 2013) and migrants in a crisis context (Paris, 24-25 April 2014).

² The two working specifically targeted the strengthening of synergies between migration and development as well as improving border management and combating irregular migration.