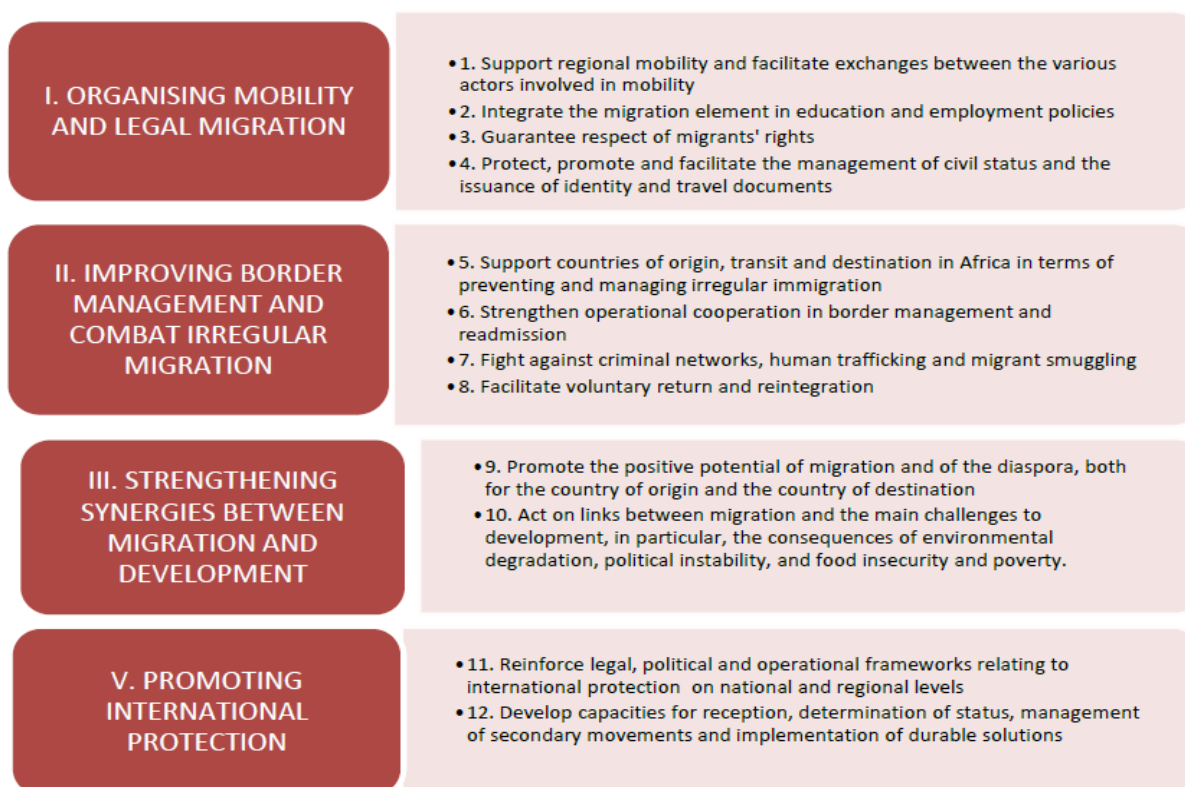


## Stock-taking report: the implementation of the Rome Programme by the Euro-African Dialogue on Migration and Development (the Rabat Process)

### 1. The Rome Programme and its context

The Rome Declaration and Programme were adopted at the fourth Ministerial Conference of the Rabat Process, which took place the 26th and 27th November 2014 in Rome. The Rome Programme, composed of four thematic domains or pillars, was developed with a wide scope, and contains an ambitious action plan including 12 priorities (see diagram below)



The current report proposes to take stock of the activities carried out by the Rabat Process (funded by the EU in the framework of the project *Support to Africa-EU Migration and Mobility Dialogue*) between 2015 and 2017, the implementation period of the Rome Programme.

It is important to take into account the fact that Euro-African relations in field of migration evolved significantly in 2015 due to the Valetta Migration Summit of November 2015, and henceforth are guided by the Valetta framework, which the Rabat Process is part of. In light of this new framework, several of the priorities established by the Rome Programme were adjusted or redefined in 2016 and 2017. For example, bearing in mind the importance accorded by Valetta to the question of visas<sup>1</sup>, the Rabat Process decided to give more importance to this issue through the organisation of a thematic meeting on visa facilitation in

<sup>1</sup> The Joint Valetta Action Plan aims to : “Engage, in a spirit of partnership, in the creation of positive synergies between negotiations on visa facilitation and discussions in other areas such as readmission”

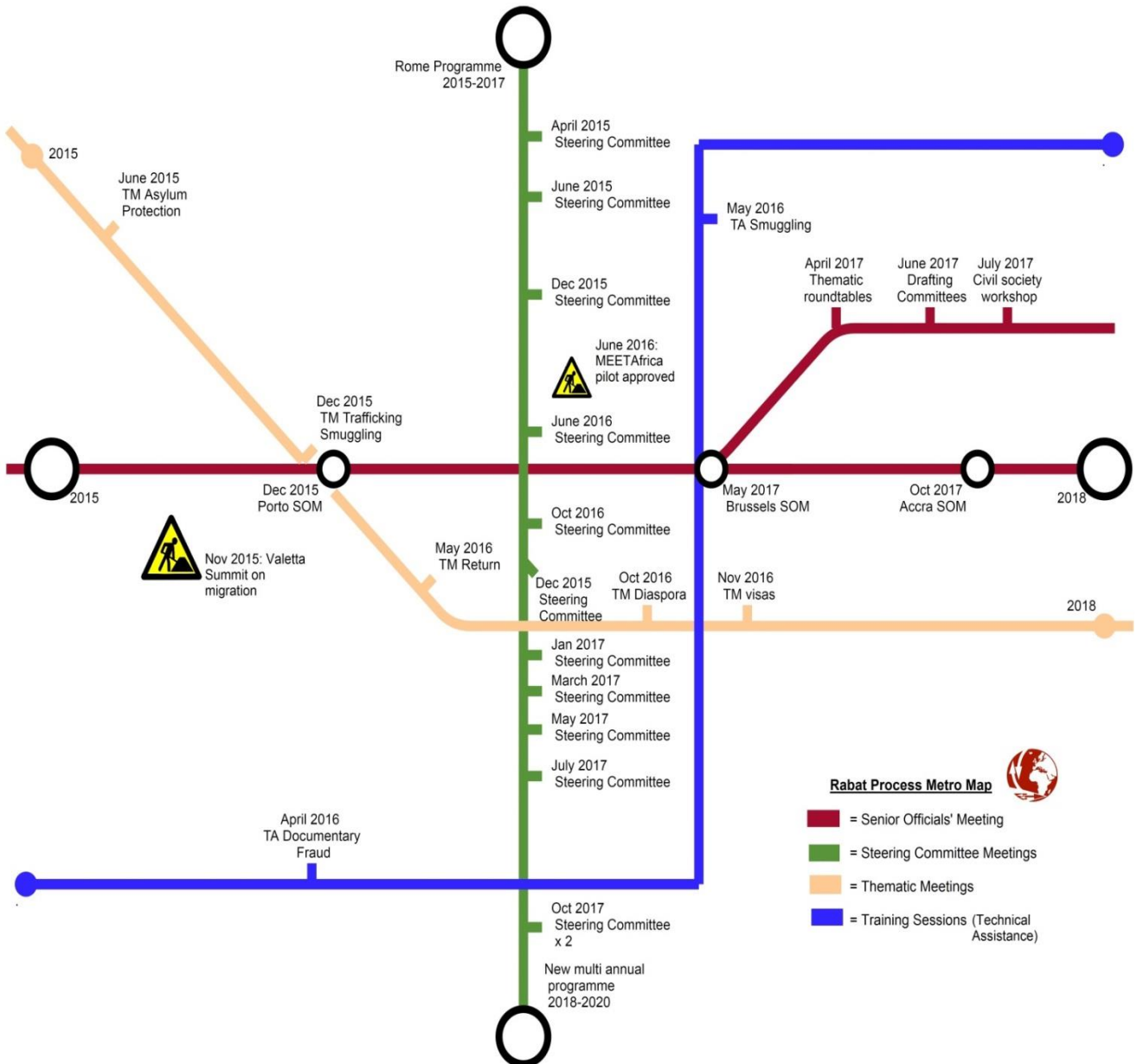


November 2016. Another example is the choice to organise a thematic meeting on the question of return, readmission and return in May 2016, although this theme only appears in the Rome Programme as a sub-priority of pillar 2 but constitutes a strategic priority for the Valetta Framework.

## 2. The implementation of the Rome Programme by the Rabat Process

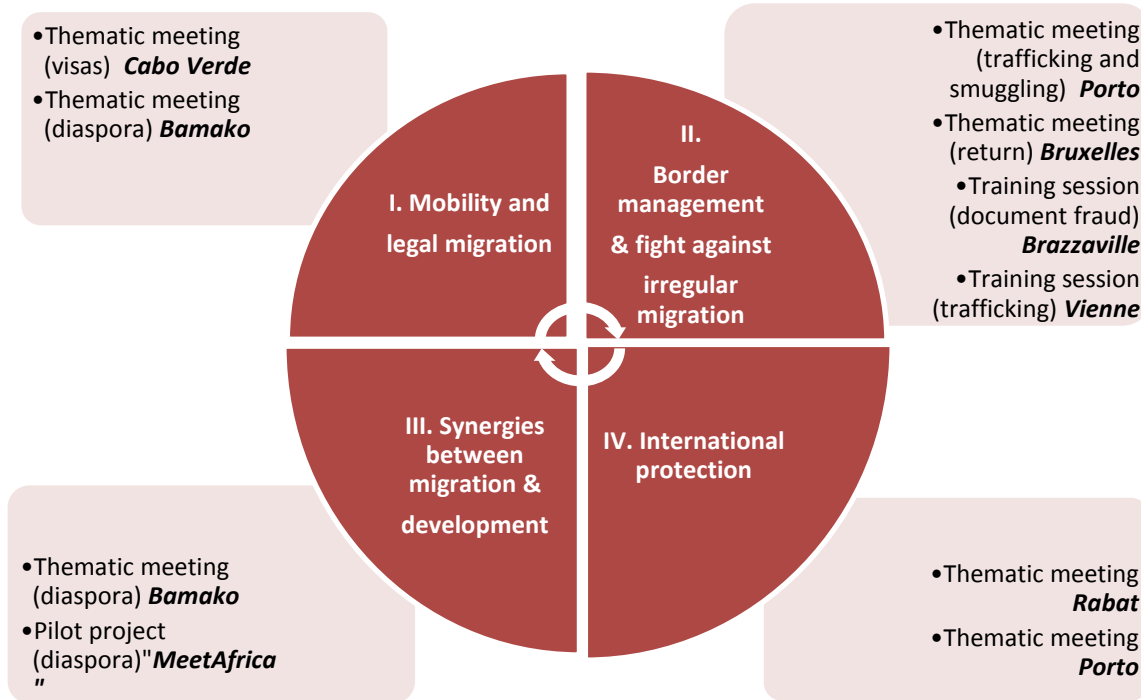
The following diagrams illustrate the implementation of the dialogue between 2015 and 2017.

### a. Metro map : implementation of activities





b. Thematic activities by pillar



c. The Rabat Process and its capacity to adapt to new strategic issues

**A more inclusive dialogue, politically and technically**

- 2 new members joined the Steering Committee (strategic governing body of the dialogue during the period under consideration : Mali et Portugal)
- A new partners also joined the dial: São Tomé e Príncipe, the third Portuguese-speaking partner
- There was increased involvement with civil society and international organisations through a series of consultations (4 thematic roundtable sin Europe and a workshop in Africa, in 2017)
- 3 international organisations (UNDP, IOM and UNHCR) as well as 2 civil society organisations (West African observatory on migrations and ICMC) participated in the Accra SOM of October 2017

**Stronger governance**

- The Chairmanship of the dialogue was strengthened. Previously, members of the Steering Committee decided together in an ad hoc manner on which country would take on the Chairmanship of the dialogue. Henceforth, a Rotating Chair system is in place whereby the Chair alternates between African and European members of the Steering Committee
- A tripartite "Troika" model of governance was established, involving the outgoing, current and incoming chair. This ensures a formal handover period between consecutive chairs, and thus better continuity and coherence within the Steering Committee and the dialogue





### Greater flexibility and transparency

- The dialogue was able to adapt to major changes in the global and regional migration context. The Rabat Process was given the mandate to monitor the implementation of the Joint Valetta Action Plan (JVAP) and as such it coordinates with the Valetta Framework on a political and technical level.
- In order to improve the transparency and accountability of the dialogue towards partners and stakeholders, two stock-taking reports were developed, providing an overview of the activities implemented within the framework of the Rome Programme

### A high-quality dialogue

- A number of activities were carried out to support the work of National Focal Points (NFP) in their roles as intermediaries between the dialogue and the national administrations in partner countries. For example, Terms of Reference were developed to guide the work and a private space was created on the Rabat Process website where NFP can access confidential documentation, thereby facilitating the sharing of information within the dialogue.

#### d. Implementation by pillar

##### I. ORGANISING MOBILITY AND LEGAL MIGRATION

1. Support regional mobility and facilitate exchanges between the various actors involved in mobility
2. Integrate the migration element in education and employment policies
3. Guarantee respect of migrants' rights
4. Protect, promote and facilitate the management of civil status and the issuance of identity and travel documents

Through the three thematic meetings (in Porto in December 2015, in Bamako in October 2016, and in Cidade Velha in November 2016), the Rabat Process produced recommendations on mobility and legal migration. In particular, the dialogue emphasised the importance of efficient civil registries, reliable identity documents and the recognition of qualifications. At the thematic meeting on visa facilitation in 2016, innovative recommendations were made in the field of common visa policies for tourism and business, in particular in the context of regional mobility. For example, the creation of online portals giving access to information on all aspects of visa procedures for applicants and the use of electronic systems and databases for managing the procedural steps for visa issuance (appointments, submission of applications, etc.). In addition, the analysis of visa-related issues according to different categories of mobility led to constructive and dynamic discussions, and partners were able to address the issues in a cross-cutting way and from an interinstitutional perspective, taking into account the importance of visa policies for development, for instance.

Some of these recommendations were reiterated in the Rabat Process Analysis Report which was presented to participants at the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) in Malta in February 2017. This report states, for example, that the Rabat Process partners « [...] wish to see significant progress regarding the facilitation of the issuance of short-stay visas. The partners encourage visa facilitation in a general manner, as well intensified efforts as part of an approach which strikes a balance between the need for facilitation and security».





**Rabat Process**  
Euro-African Dialogue  
on Migration and Development

## II. IMPROVING BORDER MANAGEMENT AND COMBAT IRREGULAR MIGRATION

- 5. Support countries of origin, transit and destination in Africa in terms of preventing and managing irregular immigration
- 6. Strengthen operational cooperation in border management and readmission
- 7. Fight against criminal networks, human trafficking and migrant smuggling
- 8. Facilitate voluntary return and reintegration

With the organisation of two related thematic meetings and two related technical assistance activities, the Rabat Process put particular emphasis to the pillar 2 of the Rome Programme, reflecting the importance of this theme which is defined as one of the two "priority axes in the understanding of the migratory phenomenon" in the political declaration (the Rome Declaration).

The thematic meeting organised in Porto in December 2015 on trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants led to the development of 12 recommendations and conclusions, some which recalled the importance of the designation and networking of focal points or contact points in charge of combating migrant smuggling. These recommendations also reflect a wish for the Rabat Process to align itself with the JVAP, as the latter also mentions the need to identify «*single national contact points for anti-smuggling and trafficking activities to enhance cooperation, including with counterparts in EU Member States and associated countries and in Europol*». In order to follow up on the Porto meeting, the Rabat Process organised a technical training aimed at developing guidelines for the establishment of a network of focal points to fight against irregular migration and the smuggling of migrants, in May 2016 in Vienna.

Other recommendations which were made at the thematic meeting in Porto also insisted on the need to define “*an international cooperation agenda to complement regional cooperation, including referral mechanisms, mutual legal assistance, the revision of bilateral agreements and cooperation, exchange of good practices*». These recommendations led to the creation, within the framework of the Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, of a Joint Research Team in Niger aimed at strengthening cooperation between destination and transit countries in the fight against the criminal networks of migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings. This pilot action was discussed both at the meetings of the Rabat Process Steering Committee and at the thematic meeting in Porto, and was also identified as a priority in the JVAP.

In the Analysis Report for the February 2017 SOM in Malta, the Rabat Process partners analysed all of the actions carried out within the scope of domain 4 of the JVAP (including data collection, capacity building, information and awareness campaigns and the fight against criminal networks). In line with the recommendations of the thematic meeting in Porto, the partners once again encouraged the pursuit of comprehensive, inclusive, multidisciplinary and harmonised approaches and stressed the importance of carrying out actions that offer economic alternatives to the populations in regions heavily affected by smuggling and trafficking.

## III. STRENGTHENING SYNERGIES BETWEEN MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

- 9. Promote the positive potential of migration and of the diaspora, both for the country of origin and the country of destination
- 10. 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.

The Migration and Development Pillar is the second priority area identified for understanding the migration phenomenon in the Rome Programme, and has therefore been treated as a priority by the Rabat Process.

Project financed by the European Union



In the framework of the project  
“Support to Africa-EU Migration and  
Mobility Dialogue (MMD)”

Project implemented by ICMPD





For example, the MEETAfrica initiative (flagship, multi-stakeholder project) was adopted by the Rabat Process in June 2016 in order to operationalise the Rome Programme. This project involves 6 member countries or observers of the Rabat Process: Algeria, Cameroon, Mali, Morocco, Senegal and Tunisia. It aims to support innovative business creation projects led by members of the African diaspora trained in Europe.

The organisation of a thematic meeting in Bamako in October 2016 on diaspora engagement strategies (with a particular focus on entrepreneurship and investment) also reflects the importance of this theme for the dialogue. Prior to the meeting itself, the Rabat Process produced two key documents: first, a background document entitled "*Diaspora engagement in the area of investment and entrepreneurship: key strategies and practices in the Rabat Process region*", which aimed to guide and inform discussions at the thematic meeting and to identify good practices and examples of diaspora engagement in the countries of the Rabat Process region. In addition, a mapping of the main actors in the field of engagement of the African diaspora was produced.

The Rabat Process partners recognise the importance of involving the private sector, NGOs and migrant associations in the field of the diaspora. As a result, they decided to invite representatives of the latter to the Bamako meeting: in total, 18 members of NGOs and associations based in Africa, or composed of members of the African diaspora were invited, as well as 2 representatives of academia. 8 members of the private sector were also invited, including representatives of banks and companies. Among them was the *Mali Agribusiness Incubation Hub*, which aims to promote agro-business enterprises and young agro-entrepreneurs and to foster sustainable growth by stimulating agricultural development to the benefit of Malian farmers. During this meeting, working groups were organised to optimise the expertise and knowledge of the participants, including NGOs. For example, a member of the ADEPT network moderated a working group tasked with examining the development of diaspora engagement strategies for South-South cooperation and triangular partnerships (migrants / diaspora with countries of origin and destination). by

This meeting led to 11 recommendations being issued, covering, for example, the development of specific policy frameworks and strategies for entrepreneurship and diaspora investment, or the segmentation of strategies according to diaspora profiles. Several recommendations underlined the importance of the regional dimension of the dialogue (for example, «*Building partnerships between the public and private sectors, the diaspora, civil society, including south-south and triangular partnerships, at the national level, but also local*») and others were of an innovative nature. For instance, in order to better analyse the use of migrant remittances it was recommended to incorporate questions on remittances into household surveys, and to collect data through investment centres and their one-stop shops, or through chambers of commerce and industry.

#### IV. INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

- **11.** Reinforce legal, political and operational frameworks relating to international protection on national and regional levels
- **12** Develop capacities for reception, determination of status , management of secondary movements and implementation of durable solutions

Priorities IV.11 and IV.12 of the Rome Programme were mainly addressed during the thematic meeting on asylum and international protection, which was held in June 2015 in Rabat. During this meeting, the Rabat Process partners called for States to pursue their commitment to international protection (by strengthening national asylum systems), to develop a regional protection area, or to strengthen national awareness-raising campaigns on protection targeting host communities. This thematic meeting initiated the work of dialogue in relation to this fourth pillar, which was included for the first time into the strategic framework

during the Rome Programme in 2014. This initial work will be pursued and consolidated, as highlighted in the Analysis Report prepared for the SOM of Malta in February 2017.

This report, which makes recommendations related to international protection, insists on the importance of increased assistance, including in the humanitarian field, and stresses the importance of continued efforts to prevent loss of life along migration routes. In order to prevent the situations of protracted forced displacement and dependence on humanitarian aid, the report encourages the development of operational plans for people in vulnerable situations caused by conflict and crisis. The report includes notions from the new EU approach to forced displacement, outlined in the Communication "Lives in Dignity: from Aid-dependence to Self-reliance" issued in April 2016.

### Human Rights at the heart of the dialogue

In the current strategic framework, Rabat Process partners commit themselves to "enabling a cross-cutting approach to topics such as respect for the human rights of all migrants and South-South migration". At the thematic meetings, partners made numerous recommendations aimed at strengthening the protection of migrants' human rights. Some key examples are listed here below:

**In relation to the 1<sup>st</sup> Pillar of the Rome Programme**, Partners recommended developing policy frameworks and specific strategies on entrepreneurship and diaspora investment aimed at promoting integration and the protection of rights (*thematic meeting Bamako, October 2016*).

**In relation to 2<sup>nd</sup> Pillar of the Rome Programme**, Partners recommended the promotion of a comprehensive approach which includes gender issues, human rights and which places the victim and the protection of his or her rights, safety and dignity at the heart of the fight against human trafficking and the smuggling of migrants (*thematic meeting Porto, December 2015*).

As a fundamental element of a global, sustainable and coherent system of migration management system the partners recommended the promotion, of a return, readmission and reintegration policy which is efficient and ensures a balance between protection of rights and respect for sovereignty. Recommendations also underlined the importance of increased efficiency in the issuing of identification and travel document so as to facilitate the flow of information, reduce delays and respect human rights and dignity (*thematic meeting Brussels, December 2016*).

**In relation to the 4<sup>th</sup> Pillar of the Rome Programme**, Partners recommended effective border management to promote respect for the migrants rights, and in particular the most vulnerable ones (*Rabat thematic meeting, June 2015*).

Dialogue partners made several recommendations for improving and **modernising civil registration systems** as a means to protect the rights of migrants. This issue need of strengthening of civil registries has been analysed from different angles: to facilitate readmission and return of migrants, to ensure safe and legal migration and to reduce the vulnerability of migrants to human trafficking and smuggling. Elsewhere, the Rabat Process partners recalled the importance of the principle of **non-refoulement** on several occasions including at the thematic meetings on asylum and protection, on return, readmission and reintegration and in the Analysis Report of the Rabat Process in preparation for the Malta Senior Official Meeting in 2017. For example, the latter mentions the need to "reinforce the promotion of civil rights and human rights."



### 3. Main achievements under the Rome Program 2015-2017

100 documents were produced to guide and support the organisation and implementation of more than 30 activities. At least 80 recommendations were made by the partners during the thematic meetings organised in the period 2015-2017. Below, some key achievements under the Rome Programme:

**Greater coherence with other regional processes:** to create synergies, the Rabat Process put into place measures to ensure greater coherence with other regional migration processes, including the Valletta framework and its related action plan, as well as the Khartoum Process. For example, two joint thematic meetings were jointly organised by the Rabat and Khartoum Processes relating to visa facilitation (November 2016, Cabo Verde) and migrant smuggling and trafficking of human beings (November 2017, in Egypt). In addition, the Chair of the Rabat Process participated in the Khartoum Process' thematic meeting in London in July 2017. This coordination between the two dialogues helps to ensure the exchange of technical expertise and widens the scope of action of the Rabat Process.

**MEETAfrica:** This pilot project, launched in the framework of the Rabat Process (following the recommendations of the dialogue Steering Committee) achieved positive results, allowing it to act as a springboard in preparation of the second phase of the project, for which a proposal has been presented to the operational committee of the EU Emergency Trust Fund.

**Enhanced engagement with civil society and international organisations:** civil society and international organisations are an important potential resource for the Rabat Process. Their thematic expertise enriches the dialogue and their knowledge contributes to the development of new learning tools. Civil society organisations have significant field experience with respect to migration, which is of value added for political decision makers. In preparation for the 2018 Euro-African Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development during which a new strategic framework for the Rabat Process will be adopted, an informal consultation process was launched in April 2017, designed to gather input from relevant stakeholders and observers external to the dialogue. The first phase of this informal consultation process took place in Europe in the form of roundtables and the second phase in Africa in the form of a workshop, with a high concentration of African participants.

**More dynamic communication:** The Rabat Process put in place an innovative communication strategy to enhance the visibility of the dialogue's activities and results, both at political and operational level. This communication strategy aims at improved information-sharing, in order to allow for a better understanding of the dialogue by the general public. To serve better this purpose, the Secretariat launched an electronic newsletter on the latest developments of the Rabat Process, and new features were created on the dialogue's website, including a private space for the members of the Steering Committee and National Focal Points.

**Quality documents:** Several documents were developed to promote the exchange of good practices and knowledge within the dialogue, including concept notes, background documents, brochures, *aide-mémoires* and guides for moderators or presenters, guiding questions, minutes, conclusions and recommendations of meetings. All these documents (with the exception of the documents produced for the Steering Committee) were developed in French and English.





#### **4. Concluding remarks: towards a new programme**

It is widely recognised that the development of specific and measurable indicators for assessing achievements is a challenge for migration dialogues. These dialogues are part of a long-term approach and their success and their potential to influence migration policies by generating knowledge, relies upon several factors: political partners' engagement, their network as well as the existence of quality expertise. Moreover, the results produced by migration dialogues are, by their very nature, difficult to assess, because of their subtle and intangible nature, especially in terms of impact on public action and the formulation of migration policies. Migration dialogues can contribute to creating a common understanding and basis for joint action. However, it is very difficult to measure results of this accurately. For this very reason, the Rabat Process is fully committed to monitoring and evaluation in order to guarantee a reliable and high-quality dialogue, capable of carrying out stock-taking based on tangible data.

To take into account the lessons learned from the analysis of the Rome Program, and in accordance with partners' suggestions, the 2018-2020 programme will focus on a selected number of objectives so as to be more "operational". These objectives will be concrete, will reflect the specific added value of the Rabat Process and will be aligned with and complementary to the Joint Valletta Action Plan (JVAP). Moreover, thanks to the JVAP long-term technical monitoring tool (which was created to support the Rabat Process in monitoring the JVAP) it will now be easier to measure how much the recommendations made within the scope of the dialogue guide partners in implementing migration policies, programmes and legislation and to know whether these recommendations are genuinely useful for not.

