

Introduction

- Thank you for invitation
- An EC perspective on partnership and international cooperation in order to build capacity in migration management
- An area which is taking more and more place in the EC's external assistance

Partnership with whom?

A) The third country

- Of the many possible interpretations of 'partnership' the most important one is the partnership between the EU and the third country or region. The essence of the partnership differs from region to region since it is obvious that the partnership which we have and the implementation modalities which result out of it to fill the partnership can not be the same between Candidate Countries, Countries with a pre-accession perspective, Countries within the ENP and countries which are 'classically' called development countries.
- In developing our policies we need to recognize that the ways of implementation are tailor made according to the needs of the countries.

By definition 'partnership' implies an agreement by at least two sides to address certain issues jointly. Partnership with a third country on migration issues thus means to find the right balance between the EU interests and on the other hand interest of the third country. At the same time migration remains one element of the much wider agenda we have with each third country.

- Our relations with partner countries are defined by **strong partnerships** and **dialogue** which are the basis of **joint ownership** of **cooperation programmes**. This is not a dogma but has indeed materialised in certain cases and this is also at the very heart of the ENP.

Co-operation with third countries starts already during the programming phase. The EC puts strong emphasis on developing country strategy papers and the national action plans together with the beneficiary countries. This creates an ownership and commitment to the actions funded by the EC. In the mid-term future, this ownership will become even stronger following the restructuring on the way the development support will be distributed: less via projects, more via sector support to the recipient countries. I will say more about that below.

And as the EC take a holistic approach towards migration management, this will be reflected in the funding. Our support is as much as possible adjusted to pressing needs, and ranges from emergency relief, development aid, and economic support to address the root causes, up to capacity building for law enforcement officers to identify trafficking victims or to combat irregular migration. It includes co-operation with the diasporas, support for any of the durable solutions for refugees (return, local integration or resettlement) and seeking for ways to better use the remittances. But we also support countries in upgrading their border management systems, with equipment, with capacity building and via trainings.

The selection of activities and priorities from this broad range of possibilities is impossible without close international and bi-lateral co-operation.

b) International partners

The EC considers any actor involved in a country which would help to bring forward the jointly agreed agenda with the country as a potential partner. Since it is the aim of the EC to promote a

balanced and comprehensive approach to migration this implies cooperation and partnership with a wide range of actors including international organisations, NGOs, EU MS or other non EU state donors such as the US.

Partnership in practice

- Political bi-lateral dialogue as the basis for assistance: this is structured through the EU's institutions
- Dialogue between the EC and key partners. This can take the form of more structured forms (strategic partnerships) of dialogue or ad hoc coordination as practised by every organisation in Brussels.
- External assistance: moving towards larger-scale sector interventions

we are faced currently in the area of migration with a multitude of projects in certain countries and we would have to further develop our approaches into the direction of what is normally called in the donor community the "sector approach":

- national strategy
- donor coordination led by national authorities
- medium-term expenditure framework

This does not mean that projects are over but we should be able to have all possible options at hand in order to choose the best way of implementation to the benefit of the third country. As you are aware we have achieved very good results in projects contracted to IOM especially in the area of trafficking in human beings and this is exactly in the cases where we clearly work along a national strategy and structured cooperation between donors.

- Support for regional dialogue as a specific form of external assistance

The EC has in most cases been very favourable towards regional dialogues on migration. In some cases the EC has only participated in other cases the EC has provided funding such as for the Budapest Process, the Söderköping Process or the Mediterranean Transit Migration process. Indeed regional dialogue is a most useful way of trust building in regions where migration has not been subject to regional cooperation. Especially the informal settings of such dialogues enable participating states and organisations to lay the grounds for further capacity building in the region.

Regional dialogues have taken various forms and one can clearly distinguish differences between a top down (ministerial conferences) or a bottom up approach (meetings at technical level). Looking at the EU MS the need for platforms for dialogue will apparently always exist and does not cede with the establishment of sophisticated national asylum/ migration management systems.

However, in terms of capacity building, looking at regional dialogues it is also clear that regional dialogues have to develop themselves further in order to serve the evolving needs of the participating states. Only in this way can the potential of the initial 'trust building' bear its fruits and best practices applied.

- Regional cooperation versus national capacity building

Another aspect of regional dialogue and regional cooperation is its relationship with national capacity building. The one should not be confounded with the other and regional cooperation does not substitute national capacity building. Regional dialogue can be at the beginning of capacity building measures in a region but should be followed up by national capacity building measures. On these national measures regional cooperation can again build upon. Unfortunately, it is not always possible to respect the ideal sequencing of activities.

What do we expect from partner organisations?

- Cooperation with the third country at the heart of the approach
- Cooperation between donors in order to maximise impact. This implies that everyone understands its role and that this role differs indeed from country to country. I understand that this is easier to say from a donor organisation than from the perspective of organisations submitting proposals for funding. But still, even in this case it is our experience that an activity benefits from a cooperative approach using all necessary resources.
- 'Impact' at the heart of what we expect from an intervention. We are obliged to live up to our engagements done with the third country and this can only be done when we can demonstrate sustainable impact which is measurable. In this context it would be an interesting exercise to try to assess measurable impact of regional dialogues: how do you measure success of dialogue? Should such an assessment actually been done given the often informal settings of such dialogues? From the donor's point of view this does not remain an interesting intellectual exercise but is crucial to justify funding decisions.

Conclusion

The EU external policies on migration and asylum as in their very early stages. In the coming years the European Commission will invest together with third countries, the EU Member States and the international organisations serious time, energy and financial resources in strengthening this policy. The ultimate goal is to help third countries in their management of migration and promote orderly migration flows between countries, including towards the EU.