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i-Map

ICMPD
International Centre for
Migration Policy Development

DIALOGUE ON MEDITERRANEAN TRANSIT MIGRATION (MTM)
INTERACTIVE MAP ON MIGRATION (I-MAP)

MTM i-Map Final Conference
Brussels, Belgium, 4-5 June 2014
Hotel Radisson Blu Royal

The MTM i-Map Platform:
Towards more targeted migration policies

Summary of Discussions

On 4-5 June 2014, the MTM i-Map Final Conference took place in Brussels, organised by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD).

The meeting gathered informally representatives of the following MTM Partner States: Algeria, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Italy, Kenya, Lebanon, Mali, Malta, Morocco, Netherlands, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Senegal, Switzerland, and Tunisia.

MTM i-Map Partner Agencies Europol (EN), Interpol (AR, EN, FR), UNHCR (AR, EN, FR), UNODC (EN, FR), and IOM (EN, FR) were present.

Representatives of EUROMED Migration III (AR, EN, FR) attended as Observers.

The overall objective of this meeting was to provide an occasion for Partner States and Partner Agencies to exchange and discuss both the achievements and shortfalls of the MTM i-Map project and the online platform. Attention was paid to how migration data and information collected and disseminated within the framework of the MTM i-Map project has supported states to develop an evidence-based approach to migration policy making. The meeting also provided the opportunity for Partner States to reflect upon future perspectives for the i-Map platform.

Project co-funded by:

Mixed
Migration layer
implemented
in cooperation
with:

EUROPOL
EUROPEAN LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY

FRONTEX

UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

UNODC
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Migration and
Development layer
implemented in
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IFAD
Enabling poor rural people
to overcome poverty

IOM · OIM

Session I - The i-Map project: a dialogue tool

The opening session began with welcoming remarks by the European Commission (EC) and ICMPD. The important contribution the project has made in keeping the dialogue door open in the region was acknowledged, particularly in light of the challenging context in which the project has taken place in the light of the Arab Spring uprisings. While it was acknowledged that migration generates significant opportunities, the scale of migration-related tragedies in recent years in which thousands have lost their lives crossing deserts and seas, were also underlined. To respond to this situation, international organisations, the EC, and Partner States have highlighted the importance of strengthened cooperation between countries and more targeted migration policies. The role of the MTM i-Map project as well as other dialogues and processes to support this endeavour was emphasised.

The European Commission shared perspectives on the achievements of the MTM i-Map project; it highlighted the unique nature of the i-Map tool in serving as a basis for improved dialogue among partner countries. It was noted that the accessibility of information and evidence has contributed to enhanced understandings of migration realities leading to better cooperation and coordination. In line with the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility, the EC stressed the importance of sharing data and knowledge as the basis for cooperation to permit better policy decisions on migration. The EC concluded that migration data provides a cornerstone for EU migration policies and that there remains a strong need to improve access to correct migration data as well as to make it user friendly.

These opening remarks were followed by presentations given by the MTM Secretariat.

In the first presentation, key features of the MTM Dialogue were highlighted, namely:
- Its state-driven orientation;
- Its networking and action roles; and
- Its construction of a knowledge base for the collection and diffusion of data.

These features are at the core of the MTM i-Map activities.

The second presentation introduced the i-Map platform. The following issues were stressed:
- The role of the i-Map as an information-sharing platform, which targets governments but is also used by a wider public;
- The versatility of the i-Map concept, which is embedded in a dialogue and can be applied to any geographical region;
- The complementarities between the platform, workshops, and meetings since data collection through the platform supports the preparation of expert meetings, and information shared at the expert meetings is made available through the platform;
- The role of country profiles, notably how they avoid duplicating information, rather facilitating access to the most up-to-date information by providing sources and links; and
- Migration information is also diffused through visualisations.

Results of the MTM i-Map project external evaluation were presented which confirmed:
- The success of the i-Map platform;
- That the number of users has increased every year since its creation and this figure has doubled since 2012; and
- That Northern states are more active in the use of the online platform than Southern states.

The noted disparity between Northern and Southern states could be explained by a preference for exchange during meetings of the latter group or perhaps wider use of the internet for the former. Consequently, a brief presentation of the i-Map website and explications of how to reach and use the different outputs was given. This was followed by a brief look back at the main results of Expert Meetings that have taken place in the past three years. It was noted that the thematic focus of the Expert Meetings was often based on suggestions made by Partner States during MTM meetings.

 The role of the News Centre as a further source of information on migration was also highlighted. A presentation on the visualisation on media information on migration gave an overview of highlights in the media over the last year as well as a brief analysis of language used in media articles and trends by thematic area and time.

This was followed by a presentation of the recently updated Animation on Mixed Migration Routes in the Mediterranean.

Session II - Achievements and shortfalls of the MTM i-Map project

Workshop I: The Partner Agencies' contribution to the MTM i-Map project

In Workshop I of Session II, the Partner Agencies presented their contribution to the i-Map project and their evaluation of its achievements and challenges for the future years. All agencies expressed their committed partnership to the MTM i-Map project.

Mixed Migration layer

- Europol highlighted their particular interest in the Mediterranean context and recognized the importance of the lines of action of the Mediterranean Task Force, notably in respect to cooperation with third countries and in fighting organised crime, irregular migration, and trafficking. Several examples were provided as to the way in which the i-Map can fit into Europol's activities. For example; Europol, in conjunction with Frontex, is trying to create an intelligence picture of secondary movements within the EU. This could be complementary to i-Maps mapping of routes in the Mediterranean region. Europol expressed their appreciation of the News Centre, which they considered to be a form of open intelligence.
- Interpol considered that the i-Map is a very useful tool. The importance of up-to-date information was stressed in a context in which source countries and migration routes are changing.
- UNHCR estimated that the i-Map has become a quasi-institution and has reached a good phase of maturity. UNHCR commented on their faithful contribution to profiles in line with their mandate to insert protection needs into all dimensions of migration management. While UNHCR commended the impressive number of tools available including the News Centre, concern was expressed for the utilisation of such tools, both within UNHCR and among other beneficiaries. The need for increased awareness-raising, for example through more MTM i-Map missions, could step up the use of the i-Map. It was noted that UNHCR has been more of a net contributor than a net resource user. Lastly, the presentation emphasised the benefits of the network, giving space for creative discussion and learning.
- UNODC emphasised the usefulness of the i-Map project, particularly concerning data on routes. UNODC showed their gratitude for the heightened visibility given to their publications and protocols thanks to hyperlinks in the profiles. Furthermore, they accorded great value to the Expert Meetings for information sharing and networking.
- Frontex was absent from the meeting but sent a note declaring that it considers that the i-Map platform is a valuable tool and that Frontex enjoyed fruitful cooperation with ICMPD and the MTM i-Map project,

notably through the exchange of information. Frontex supports and contributes to the profiles particularly through information provided by the Annual Risk Analyses and regular feedback to the profiles.

<u>Migration and Development layer</u>

- IOM highlighted their contribution to the Expert Meetings. Attention was drawn to the many initiatives collecting data on M&D and possibilities for future cooperation linked to the i-Map. Furthermore, IOM stated that they would welcome the opportunity to access the restricted part of the website.

<u>Workshop II: Results of the external evaluation of the MTM i-Map project</u>

In Workshop II of Session II, a presentation of the external evaluation was given by an expert. The evaluation results indicated that overall, the project outputs respond to the needs of the beneficiaries, notably in terms of the provision of data and the exchange of information. Furthermore, it was noted that the platform as an information tool and the Expert Meetings as a communication tool have contributed towards enhanced cooperation.

During the plenary discussion, the following points related to the MTM i-Map project were highlighted:

- A clear interest in the continuation of the MTM i-Map project was acknowledged by all respondents;
- All countries agreed that the MTM i-Map project facilitates cooperation and sharing of information and knowledge, which is crucial for evidence-based policies;
- To support this process, the importance of continuously updating profiles was underlined;
- Several countries commented on the achievements of the MTM i-Map project in creating a community of countries who share similar concerns. The establishment of a committed partnership among equal parties of this community has supported the exchange of information and the development of common understandings;
- Emphasis was placed on the importance of tackling migration management at the local level and that the upcoming City-to-City project will most probably have an i-Map component; and
- Several countries mentioned the importance of new stakeholders becoming involved with the i-Map, for example civil society actors.

Session III - Towards more targeted migration policies

In the last session, participants discussed key issues of concern pertaining to effective migration governance in the region, as well as suggestions for future improvements of the i-Map project.

<u>Key issues of concern</u>

- Participants noted that the Syria crisis is one of the main challenges currently affecting the Mediterranean region. Some countries also drew attention to the increasing use of the Central Mediterranean route by Syrian nationals;
- Participants also signalled the importance of the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes region for mixed migration flows.
- Some participants expressed concern over the transit of refugee flows and the difficulties of managing porous borders, which they felt may be accompanied by a heightened risk of terrorism. Informally, Arab states recalled several times the need for support in their efforts towards countering terrorism, although it was stressed that migration and terrorism are two different phenomena which should not be conflated; and

- The need to take into account the heterogeneous nature of mixed migration flows was raised and the importance of collecting data on the composition of these flows, notably regarding gender, age, the physical conditions of migrants and the number of minors.

Potential further improvements

- The importance of state ownership was raised by several representatives. In so doing, the necessity for focal points to fully participate in the project was deemed crucial. The necessity of determining the right focal point was underlined and their essential role as a multiplier at the national level, promoting and raising awareness of the i-Map tool;
- The issue of the formalization of the MTM Dialogue and the introduction of a stronger analytical component was discussed;
- Many Partner States mentioned the importance of taking into further consideration South-South movements as well as circular mobility;
- Giving more attention to intra-African migration and mapping South-South routes was suggested by some representatives;
- The possibility to further focus the attention on the Horn of Africa as well as to expand the geographical outreach to the Great Lakes Region was suggested. In particular, some representatives requested a specific study to be carried out to identify major issues related to migration in the Horn of Africa as well as along the Central Med and East Africa routes; and
- Some Partner States suggested developing capacity building and operational initiatives such as trainings.

Closing Session - Conclusions

In the wrap-up session, meeting conclusions were based on presentations and interventions of the representatives and were presented by ICMPD. Emphasis was placed on how the i-Map has contributed to building common understandings of migration realities, which is the basis for any form of cooperation and lies at the heart of evidence-based policies. The trusting relationships established in the framework of the MTM Dialogue and the informal setting in which it is situated have afforded open discussion and fruitful exchanges among representatives, laying the grounds for the development of a committed partnership among equals. In this light, there was a general consensus calling for the continuation of the i-Map, capitalizing on what has been developed in the past and expanding on such initiatives in the future years.