



Rabat Process

Euro-African Dialogue on
Migration and Development

Reference country action

Virtual meeting

On legal migration with a focus on labour migration

16th – 17th December 2021

Via zoom

Outcome
document

Under the co-chairmanship of Portugal and Cabo Verde, Rabat Process Reference Countries
for Domain 2 of the Marrakesh Action Plan on legal migration and mobility



Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros,
Cooperação e Integração Regional

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Introduction

Virtual meeting on legal migration with a focus on labour migration, 16th – 17th December 2021

- Co-chaired by Portugal and Cabo Verde, **reference countries** for domain 2 of the Marrakesh Action Plan
- First meeting of the Rabat Process tackling this subject
- Responds to the priorities in domain 2 of the [Marrakesh Action Plan](#) on legal migration and mobility
- The meeting attracted a diverse public of over 100 participants, comprising 25 countries and ten international organisations and civil society organisations
- The meeting started with a high-level opening ceremony in the presence of the Minister of Home Affairs and Justice of Portugal and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Regional Integration of Cabo Verde
- Secretary of State for Migrations for Spain (which is currently chairing the Rabat Process) confirmed that it will make legal migration one of its priorities in 2022 and will organise a meeting on the subject

Aim of the meeting: identifying the main challenges and analysing appropriate solutions for Rabat Process countries in the domain of legal migration, with a particular focus on labour migration.

Expected results of the meeting:

The initial results¹ were revised to take account of the fact that the meeting (which was supposed to be face-to-face) was held as a virtual meeting because of COVID-19. The expected results of this virtual meeting were an exchange of best practices on development of projects and policies on legal migration among political decision makers, operational actors and partners of the Rabat Process.

This document provides an overview of the main **conclusions of the meeting** and the **challenges and opportunities** linked with labour migration between the EU and its partner countries.

● **Overview of the Euro-African context of legal migration**

There is a variety of global and continental political frameworks regarding labour migration in Africa and there are many migration governance challenges.

Labour migration in Africa is largely intra-regional (80 %) consisting mostly of migration of **low-skilled workers** in areas such as agriculture, fisheries, mining and construction as well as services such as domestic work, health care, cleaning, restaurants and hotels. **The south-south migration corridors towards neighbouring labour markets** in search of work are of increasing importance. For instance, in 2019 East Africa, West Africa and Southern Africa together hosted more than 80% of migrant workers in Africa.

The political frameworks of labour migration on the African continent are diverse:

- 1) **Globally:** the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
- 2) **At Continental level:** the AU's Revised Migration Policy Framework and Plan of Action for Africa (2018-2030), the AU Protocol on Free Movement of Persons in Africa and the Joint Labour Migration Programme adopted by the heads of state and government of the AU.

¹ Results initially expected: (1) formulating key points for political decision makers to be taken into account when developing appropriate legal migration policies; (2) formulating key points for project managers to serve as guidelines when implementing initiatives connected with legal migration.

There are many migration governance challenges: fostering bilateral agreements between countries of origin and destination that protect the labour rights of migrants, enhancing the social protection of migrant workers and assisting the return and reintegration of migrant workers.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a strong impact on mobility and on legal migration systems, in particular in terms of migration governance.

In the present context of the pandemic, special attention should be paid to managing mobility, taking account of the following aspects:

- **Investing in consular services** and raising awareness among migrants of the services available (the pandemic has shown that stranded migrants did not know what services they were entitled to and whom to contact to get back home).
- **Cooperating with destination countries**, in particular to coordinate return and reintegration and to avoid repatriation without adequate health measures.
- **Improving access to health care for all** as a public health priority.
- **Strengthening rules and regulations and ensuring compliance** by recruiters.
- **Improving data collection** in order to provide information for emergency plans in destination and host countries.

Several challenges relating to managing the COVID-19 pandemic have been identified:

- There is a risk that **low- and middle-income countries are left outside** the scope of new public health measures. This may lead to a widening of the inequality gap between countries.
- **Labour shortages** in many sectors in Europe have to be addressed.
- **Close dialogue between countries of origin and destination** is indispensable in order to resume mobility and avoid uncoordinated health measures, at both bilateral and regional level.
- European and African partners should take **obstacles to mobility** into account, in particular by improving the quality of training, recognising qualifications and strengthening the capacity of national employment agencies.

• **Pilot projects for Talent Partnership: models of partnerships between the EU and Africa**

Talent Partnerships: towards closer cooperation between the EU and partner countries

Under the New European Pact on Migration and Asylum, tailored and balanced global partnerships will be established with the principal countries of origin and transit of the EU, the objective being to set up partnerships to attract talent. The aim is to:

- **strengthen legal migration with the principal partner countries**, building on existing cooperation;
- **develop mobility programmes for labour and training**, financed by the EU, matching EU job offers with employers' skills requirements;
- **improve capacity** in vocational training and integration of returning migrants;
- **enhance collaboration** with ministries, employers, social partners, actors in education and members of diasporas.

EU pilot projects on legal migration implemented since 2018 have made it possible to try out different labour migration schemes between the EU and partner countries.

These pilot projects include the private sector, associations, NGOs, universities and any other actor likely to contribute to implementing labour migration programmes. They aim to fill the gaps in work force in some sectors of the labour market of EU member states, facilitate cooperation with third countries on overall management of migration flows, and reduce irregular migration flows by offering safe and legal alternatives to people wishing to migrate for work or study.

Concerning lessons learnt and challenges, the following should be noted:

- It is necessary to devote time to the **design and implementation** of the project in order to establish a relationship of trust among the actors and to make the project more sustainable;
- It is equally important to create a dedicated **framework for follow-up and evaluation** with measurable qualitative objectives and indicators throughout the life of the project, so as to be able to make adjustments to the project as and when necessary;
- In order to ensure that candidates' skills match the needs of companies, **stringent recruitment methods** should be adopted (e.g. face-to-face interviews, selection committees, etc.);
- **Recognition of skills and qualifications is of essential importance**, more particularly for highly skilled migrants;
- **The private sector** should be involved early on, right from the project design stage;
- It is necessary **to involve all stakeholders in a multi-party and inclusive approach**, and to make sure that the institutions are able to commit and ensure the smooth running of the project.

MOVE GREEN project between Andalusia and northern Morocco

This is a programme for **circular mobility between the region of Andalusia in Spain and northern Morocco**, offering possibilities for networking and vocational qualifications to talented Moroccans who want to work in **the renewable energy and green economy sectors**. The project has a term of 36 months (September 2021 to August 2024) and seeks to enhance their employability and entrepreneurial skills and strengthen public-private cross-border partnerships at local and regional level. **The project has a local focus**, as the **Andalusian Fund of Municipalities for International Solidarity (FAMSI)** - which implements the project - works closely with municipalities in Andalusia, universities and companies offering traineeships. This project makes it possible to strengthen partnerships between public institutions and private actors by organising seminars, experience exchange visits and awareness-raising campaigns.

European pilot project linking ICT development in Morocco to labour shortages in Flanders (PALIM)

The aim of the PALIM project is to facilitate cooperation between Belgium and Morocco in managing legal migration by trying out an innovative model of labour mobility, linking the development of the new technologies sector in Morocco with the shortage of qualified IT workers in Belgium and Morocco. Through reskilling courses, 120 young unemployed Moroccans were able to find employment in Morocco and Belgium. This project showed the importance of setting up **public-private partnerships involving all stakeholders in the two countries** fostering cooperation between public services (ministries, public employment services, employers' and sectorial federations) and private actors to implement the project. The THAMM project cited below has taken over from the PALIM project.

• **Labour migration initiatives and models to strengthen Euro-African relations**

The Global Skill Partnerships initiative makes it possible to make skilled migration beneficial for countries of origin, countries of destination and migrants.

This initiative differs from other models in that it **responds to the challenges of the brain drain** and the development of countries of origin. Under this scheme, individuals are trained in the skills needed by both the country of origin and the country of destination. It also strengthens institutions responsible for training, and enables direct cooperation with employers in the countries of origin and destination, focusing on medium-skilled occupations. This model has been put in place in several countries, specifically between Belgium and Morocco (PALIM project) and between Germany and Kosovo (YES project in the building sector).

The **lessons learnt/challenges** include the following:

- **All stakeholders** (ministries, employers, federations and associations of companies, national employment agencies, diaspora, etc.) should participate right from the start of the project;
- Training should meet **demands in the private sector**;
- **Partnerships should be flexible** to ensure that training matches demand throughout the process;
- It is important to include **sound evaluations** to prove the usefulness of the project.

The **THAMM initiative** (Towards a **Holistic Approach to Labour Migration Governance and Labour Mobility in North Africa**): **a labour migration model between the EU and North Africa**

The countries benefiting from the project are Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Belgium and Germany. Four partners implement this project: ILO, IMO, GIZ and Enabel.

The general aim of the THAMM project is to **enable mutually beneficial opportunities for labour migration and mobility that are safe, legal and properly arranged** for the countries of North Africa. To achieve this, the project strives to promote five significant aspects:

- **Governance**: strengthening legislation, policies and national strategic frameworks in order to include labour migration.
- **Skills**: strengthening the regulatory capacity of public employment services and promoting recognition of qualifications and skills prior to departure and upon return.
- **Data**: supporting public institutions in collecting data on international labour migration. **Access to data is crucial**. Accurate statistics on international migrant workers are necessary in order to ensure efficient design, implement, follow up and evaluation of labour migration policies.
- **Mobility schemes**: enhancing institutional capacity for managing labour migration processes and improving partners' knowledge of recognition of qualifications for foreign markets.
- **Regional cooperation**: strengthening dialogue and cooperation among partner countries on labour migration and mobility.

Various activities have been achieved under the THAMM project with a view to (1) **enhancing the capacities of partner countries**; (2) providing **technical support** for partner countries, advocacy and awareness raising (national campaign for ethical and equitable recruitment in Morocco); (3) **regional cooperation** (first regional conference on adapting labour migration to the COVID-19 crisis in the countries of the EU and North Africa in July 2021).

Examples of projects fostering circular migration between Spain and Morocco: the GECCO programme and the WAFIRA initiative

The GECCO programme, which has been around since the 1990s, aims to recruit workers (women, in particular, are included) originating from third countries to meet labour shortages in some sectors in Spain, mainly agriculture. Each year, this circular migration programme enables thousands of Moroccan women to come and work in Spain. An extension of and complementary to this programme, the **WAFIRA initiative** was set up as a pilot project between Spain and Morocco, and aims to maximise the impact of circular migration and mobility on development. WAFIRA will provide training and support for 250 women taking part in the GECCO programme for their durable socio-economic reintegration in their communities of origin. Moreover, WAFIRA will strengthen the Moroccan institutions to enable them to provide services to migrant workers conducive to their reintegration in the Moroccan labour market.

- **Examples of initiatives and projects aiming to promote mobility of recent graduates and young talent**

Skills Initiative for Africa (SIFA) to improve job opportunities for young people in Africa

This initiative, based in South Africa, is associated with the African Union's Development Agency (NEPAD) and supported by the German government. It has an **innovative financing facility** intended to fund **projects for developing the skills of young people in several African countries** in a range of different areas. These include a centre of excellence in renewable energy (Cameroon), training in agro-industry (Togo), development of IT skills (Tunisia), database for young entrepreneurs (Ghana), development of ICT skills (Ethiopia), and agricultural value chains (Kenya) and air conditioning and refrigeration (South Africa).

Initiatives implemented by the AUF (Association of Francophone Universities) to strengthen mobility and employability of students and young graduates in Africa

The AUF has set up a range of innovative projects to improve professional integration of young graduates, and to foster the development of a culture of entrepreneurship. These include the **SALEEM project** (organisation / guidance for student entrepreneurship in the Maghreb, 2017-2021) which, among other things, facilitated the creation of a new national status ("**student entrepreneur**") in Morocco and Tunisia, and **Francophone Employability Centres** established within universities to help the professional integration of young graduates.

The Young Generation as Change Agents (YGCA) project for circular migration between Spain and Morocco

This project, part of the European Commission's call for EU pilot projects on legal migration, has enabled young Moroccan graduates to **pursue a one-year master's degree course** in Spain, and has supported them in setting up **business and entrepreneurship projects upon their return to Morocco** after obtaining their master's degree, thereby becoming "change agents" for their country. The young Moroccan graduates selected each received the sum of € 10 000 as seed capital for their start-up, and benefited from intensive mentoring and an individual training programme to fine-tune their projects. This project has highlighted the importance of **providing information to young people during pre-departure stage** (training in the political and economic context in Spain, language courses, obtaining permits and visas, etc.) and of **communication** (permanent contact between graduates and a focal point during their stay in Spain in order answer questions etc.).

- **Examples of projects and initiatives concerning the multi-party approach to labour migration**

The diaspora plays a crucial role in implementing labour migration programmes.

Study conducted by ECDPM, EUDiF and MPF: Implementation of Talent Partnerships, what role can the diaspora play.

This study, which is [available online](#), examines the role that different diaspora actors (individuals, formal and informal organisations, new generations) can play in facilitating labour mobility between the country of origin and the country of destination. **The role of entrepreneurs among the diaspora is of crucial importance:** they know how things work in the host country, have the necessary experience to navigate the business world and create jobs by employing their fellow-citizens and by organising mentoring programmes. Moreover, this study analyses **the diaspora's involvement throughout the migration cycle** (pre-departure, arrival, stay in the EU and, where appropriate, return to the country of origin) and maps out the specific activities in which the diaspora is already involved which may contribute to achieving the objectives of Talent Partnerships. The study highlights the conditions that need to be put in place in order to enable the diaspora to get involved in the various roles

required throughout the migration cycle. Diaspora actors have a role to play in reducing the skills gap between the qualifications of young talented people and the requirements of companies through skills transfer.

The MEET Africa I and II project implemented by Expertise France, financed by AFD and the EU

MEET Africa forms part of a continuous series of actions which the EU and its member states have conducted for years, in particular in France and Germany, to promote the creation of wealth and jobs in Africa. This programme created an **entrepreneurial ecosystem between the diaspora and the relevant actors in the EU and Africa** and a dedicated support mechanism. In the first stage of the project, implemented in Morocco, Tunisia, Senegal, Mali, Côte d'Ivoire and Cameroon, 80 entrepreneurs received guidance and support and 300 stable jobs were created in the IT sector. The second stage, now in progress, will provide guidance and assistance to 140 entrepreneurs and financial support to 170 entrepreneurs who will receive a grant to help them take out bank loans. In this second stage, the focus is on **gender** and the institutions of the different countries will be closely involved in piloting the programme.

It is clear from this study and from the MEET Africa project, that **the diaspora should be involved at all stages of the project/programme** together with the other stakeholders (design, implementation and evaluation).

The private sector plays a crucial role in labour migration projects by strengthening the mobility of workers towards the EU.

The private sector will play an essential role in implementing the EU's Talent Partnerships. To ensure their success, there will have to be structural exchanges with the bodies involved (e.g. chambers of commerce, employers' associations and others) as well as investment to establish a climate of trust. The ICMPD is piloting two initiatives intended to ensure that the private sector gets more closely involved in the mobility of workers to the EU:

- **Pilot project in Morocco:** This project will draw in European and foreign companies present in Morocco who want to invest in the country through public-private partnerships. A feasibility study is in progress to pinpoint the skills required.
- **The INSPIRE project:** is a regional initiative designed to initiate a structured public-private dialogue on skills partnerships aimed at incubating partnership schemes between the EU Member States and partner countries from Africa, the Western Balkans and the Eastern Partnership region. Concretely, the project will bring together relevant public actors, European small-and-medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), partner country SMEs, industry groups, and financial institutions from the EU and the target regions into a series of national consultations and a partnership laboratory to identify current and future skills needs and propose market-led solutions for labour upskilling and skills matching. As part of its core results, the initiative will incubate feasible, implementation-ready and partner-endorsed skills partnership models in digital and green sectors of countries of origin; and establish multi-stakeholder platforms for dialogue able to steer, sustain and extend each migration and mobility-based skills partnership, active and promoted at the regional level.

Some examples of projects and initiatives that use the sectorial approach to labour migration

Recruiting workers in the ICT sector: the Digital Explorers project

Digital Explorers aims to pilot a temporary legal migration programme enabling **young specialists working in the ICT sector to go from Nigeria to Lithuania**. The programme seeks to improve their skills while filling gaps in work force, and to contribute to the growth and development of the digital economy in both countries. Enterprise Lithuania is implementing this project in collaboration with AfriKo, the Diversity Development Group, Code Academy and the Ventures Platform Foundation, in the framework of EU pilot projects on legal migration. One of the challenges of the project is to **put the project participants in contact with companies in Lithuania** to acquire general and technical skills.

Germany's experience in sustainable recruitment of nurses (Triple Win project)

Germany faces **increasing labour shortages**, in high- and medium-skilled occupations. This is the case in the health sector, more particularly in nursing. By 2025, the sector will need 150 000 new nurses and this requirement is bound to grow with the ageing of the German population.

The Triple Win programme, which has been around since 2013, is the result of collaboration between the German development agency (GIZ), the international placement service of the German federal employment agency (ZAV) and the employment agencies of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Philippines and Tunisia. The ZAV and the employment agencies select nurses in the countries of origin offer them **preparatory language courses and vocational training courses and places them in jobs in Germany**. GIZ assumes responsibility for technical measures required for migration (facilitation of visas, equivalence of nursing diplomas between the countries). Visas are normally issued for one year but extensions and possibly permanent residence are possible. The nurses may bring over their families to live with them in Germany.

Meeting labour shortages in Europe and improving the employability and skills of skilled workers in Africa: the MATCH project

MATCH aims to meet labour shortages in four EU member states by enabling **young graduates from Nigeria and Senegal to work for companies in Belgium, Italy, Luxembourg or the Netherlands** where there are labour shortages in specific sectors (agriculture, health care and infrastructure in particular). This programme seeks to improve the skills of young migrants and enhance their employability, while at the same time meeting shortages on the EU labour market and, more long term, contributing to the development of Nigeria and Senegal.

In addition to filling job vacancies, MATCH also provides activities such as improving skills, strengthening capacities and sharing knowledge among the participating European and African countries. Several recommendations have been put forward within the framework of this project: (1) it is necessary to ensure **flexibility within mobility projects** to enable workers to come to Europe and eventually return to their country of origin. (2) It is important to help countries of origin to develop **sound rules and regulations** in order to avoid situations in which labour migration could lead to trafficking in human beings. (3) There must be cooperation between countries of origin and destination in order to ensure the **portability of social rights** (retirement, social security cover, etc.)